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**POETRY**  
**A MAGAZINE OF VERSE**  
**VOLUME IX**







# Poetry

A Magazine of Verse

VOLUME IX  
October-March, 1916-7

Edited by  
Harriet Monroe




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CHICAGO



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The editors deeply regret to record the death, during the past half-year, of two of POETRY's generous and public-spirited guarantors. Mr. Patrick A. Valentine, distinguished financier and lover of the arts, died at Oconomowoc, Wisconsin, in August, too late for record in Vol. VIII, which had then gone to press. The Hon. William J. Calhoun, lawyer, diplomat, statesman, friend and special envoy of three presidents, and Minister to China from 1910 to 1913, died in Chicago, September 19th.

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# Poetry

A Magazine of Verse

VOL. IX

No. I

OCTOBER, 1916

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## GROTESQUES\*

### *A Decoration in Black and White*

To the memory of a clear night with stars in it: Santa Barbara, June twenty-second, nineteen-fifteen.



HE reader is seated in the theatre of his imagination. After an Overture, delicate and not without irony, the curtain between the reader and the play is drawn upward. Before him is placed a decoration in black and white, a flat conventionalized design of tall white trees upon a black background. This background is framed and occupies somewhat more than half the width of the stage. To his left, the white disc of the moon is drawn, in a clear space of black sky. Opposite, on the branch of one of the trees, is a black owl, faintly outlined. Beneath the trees, the

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[1]



## POETRY: *A Magazine of Verse*

*zigzag convention by which the idea "brook" is visualized. A single lotus rises from this, left; and near by are the white representations of rocks.*

*About three feet forward from this background, extending from its edge to either side of the stage, is a frame of dark gauze, behind which droop the Grotesques, inanimate, awaiting the need of them. They have white faces lined with black, and their arms and hands are white.*

*Close against the background in the center stands Capulchard, master of the decoration, a sardonic figure, with long tense fingers. He is the designer. And because the basis of decoration is pantomime, he weaves but the minimum of words through these episodes, developing them rather by curious groupings broken in outline by the mergence of white and black against the black and white of the background.*

*Capulchard. [After a pause, turning towards the Audience.]*

*This is a forest—that is a Grotesque.*

*You will find the forest somewhere in your thought.*

*Its trees are graphic like an arabesque;*

*The pale moon shines—I touch it with my hand.*

*I dip the water from the brook beneath,*

*And fling it high among the leaves like dew.*

*The effect is there, although the fact is not;*

*So shall all things here seem—illusory.*

*Who cares—who knows what brook is in his mind or in yours?*





It's the quintessence only that endures.  
 The moon, that clear quintessence—see—is split  
 To myriad moons by the brook, each moon like it!  
 The moons are washed away—but there's the moon.  
 Thus with design: I draw you these Grotesques,  
 For your amusement spur them into—life?—  
 Sign for thing signified, the hieroglyph.  
 Give o'er philosophy to Beldame Owl:  
 She thinks not; but you think the thoughts she should.  
 How wise a counsellor!—if she does not hoot  
 And break the illusion.

*The Owl.* [Softly.] Hoot!

*Capulchard.* The idol speaks;  
 And thence the abode of wisdom is transferred.  
 Its seat is now, I dare say, in the moon  
 Till sunrise. . . . Open the picture-book.  
 The first design—a song: these be the words.

[*Capulchard makes a sign towards the Woman who, inert, is behind the screen on the left. She lifts her head and sings as if without consciousness.*]

*Woman.* [Singing at left.]

With body enwrapped in a mantle light,  
 Softly a-down the shadowy night,  
 Lo, the moon 'neath overlaced branches white—

[*The song pauses for a moment while he takes the Crone from behind the screen on the right, gives her a staff, and places her within the edge of the decoration, whereof she at once becomes a part.*]



POETRY: *A Magazine of Verse*

*Capulchard. [Resuming his former position.]*

In counterpoint, enter a stooped Grotesque.

Tell where goest thou, Crone.

*Crone. [Crossing.]* To a palace that's dark.

*Capulchard.* The grave?

*Crone.* I know not: I am blind, stone blind.

*Woman. [Continuing her song.]*

White birds on the white-branched, motionless trees,

Two by two. Dark my steps fall faint, Japanese.

Love am I; I am hate: yet know nothing of these.

*Capulchard.* Thou art old: read the song. She is young.

*Crone.* Time is naught,

When it's past and the staff seeks no light o' the moon.

*Capulchard.* Frail withered leaf—the first November  
wind—

*[Exit the Crone, who, upon reaching the edge of the  
decoration, becomes inert and sinks down limply behind the  
screen.]*

The song: full-throated, dark, and passionate.

Her lover?—No, we'll save the pencil-stroke.

*Woman. [Continuing her song.]*

My beloved awaiting me, swift toward the spring  
I approach!

*Capulchard.* There is silence.

*Woman.* The kiss that I bring—

*[Capulchard has pushed the Crone back. He now lifts  
the Woman, clad in a dark mantle edged with white, and  
places her at the edge of the decoration. She enters.]*



The kiss—to the mocking-voiced echoes I sing.

[*An interval. To herself, in a slow monotonous voice.*]

Warm path by the stream, thou art chill to-night.

Phantom shadows—weave—

[*She glides off, right, and sinks down inert.*]

Capulchard. Her voice glides past

Like it was she—dark, sinuous delight.

Expressive outline bound her beauty fast.

Therewith she and the episode stop short.

Inceptive decoration: play it out

Each as you will, the sequence unenslaved.

It's naught to these Grotesques, unconscious strings

Scraped into melody, but else inert.

And yet, why hunt your pleasure to its death?

Ignore the ending, trace a new design.

Black background, disc of the moon: create—a Sprite.

Whose presence makes this wood an eerie place.

[*He goes right and, lifting the Sprite, a curious black and white figure, brings it to the edge of the decoration.*]

There's little trick to the supernatural.

Sprite. Tiptoe a-tread, through the wood, by the brook,  
the Sprite enters—oh, ho!

Dance, crinkled stream!

Ha!—a dragon-fly poised upon air!

[*Blows.*] Begone.

[*Reflectively.*] It is night.

[*Bowing.*] Madame Owl,

Hoot! to-who!





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**The Owl.**      Hoot!      |

**Sprite.** Brisk maker of shadows, clown moon!

[*He stands grimacing at it; then, upon a gesture from Capulchard, he begins with arms and fingers a shadow-dance, rapid and spontaneous but wholly conventionalized. There are of course no shadows.*]

Quick, clown moon—make them faster!

[*Capulchard abruptly stops him on a posture at the extreme left.*]

**Capulchard.** The dance proceeds, conventioned in a pose. Yet the design wants counterbalance. . . .

Here to the right I'll place the Girl-motive.

[*He lifts the Girl from the receptacle, right, and places her at the edge of the decoration, giving her at the same time a conventionalized symbol representing a bird. She enters, in the controlled and exaggerated manner characteristic of the grotesques, her movements wholly conventionalized and idyllic. Her costume, predominantly white, remains constant through all the episodes. Capulchard, at once developing the possibilities of the design, directs the notice of the Sprite to her.*]

**Girl.** [*To herself, motionless.*] Who am I that come,  
Caressing tenderly the sign of bird?

A Girl, in white, alone, beside the pattern brook  
I wander without fear, of fear not having heard.

**Capulchard.** Meanwhile—

**Girl.** Upon this sward beneath these trees I rest, and say:



Sweet bird, here bathe your wings where the pure white  
lotus flowers dream

Prettily.

*Capulchard.* [*To the Audience.*]

Hark: the bird sings—

*Girl.* With éclat . . . With éclat . . .

*Capulchard.* I gave her that phrase out of character.

She looks—

*Girl.* [*Seeing the Sprite, who stands hungrily erect poised to leap towards her. She is struck motionless.*]

'Neath the moon . . .

*Capulchard.* [*Holding them apart in a pause which he carefully guards.*]

Note

How sensitively to the artist's will,  
Even the minutest shade, the figures drawn  
Respond. Though tense the moment, yet the crux  
Seems somewhat too abrupt. If we instead  
Design her as if thrall'd by fantasy,  
Bound by the spell of her own wayward longing. . . .

[*Her expression changes from fear to eagerness. Capulchard places on her robe one or two conventionalized black leaves. He then extricates the Man from among the Grotesques, left, gives him a bow, and places him at the edge of the decoration. Capulchard steps back, almost invisible against the wood.*]

*Man.* With tread firm and taut deep through this strange  
wood fearless come I,





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Hunter of mighty beasts, by prowess conqueror, else slain.  
One arrow unsped yet left sole in my quiver.

*Capulchard.* [*Designing, as she cowers from the Man.*]

Having crossed, he turns.

But she, who shuns release from love of dreams—

*Girl.* Go hence.

*Man.* Are you a mortal maiden that dread less  
This place than—?

[*Sees the Sprite.*] Ah! . . .

*Capulchard.*

The tragic primitive.

*Sprite.* [*Triumphantly.*]

She's mine. Come, spirits!

*Capulchard.*

Portray ghosts by effect.

Against the black—

*Man.* Black ghosts! White!

*Capulchard.*

Against white.

*Man.* [*Recoiling.*]

Pale phantoms—four—three—five . . .

*Girl.*

Fright him, dear dreams!

*Capulchard.* [*Thoughtfully, as the Man turns to flee.*]

His movement outward draws discordant line;

Courage would make the rhythm more compact.

Stand, therefore!

*Man.* [*Made to assume toward the Girl an attitude of  
protection which would surmount his own fear.*]

Therefore, I stand.

*Capulchard.*

His courage wakens love.



*Sprite.* [*Beckoning her, as she turns from him.*]

He cannot hold you—

[*A pause: then the Sprite snaps his fingers indifferently.*]

*Man.* They are gone.

*Sprite.* Forth I follow the brook—to the end—where a pixie—

[*Exit. Outside the frame he falls inert.*]

*Capulchard.* The end is not far distant either way;  
To left, to right, the picture has an edge.

*Girl.* [*Passing her hand across her brow.*]

How came I to this forest?

*Capulchard.* We'll omit

The anti-climax, princess—the routine  
That ends all well. Instead, a love-theme weave,  
A tapestry of passion darker-toned:  
Placing the Woman-motive in her stead,  
Re-draw the Man as Warrior—.

*Girl.* Ever then  
You will protect me?

*Man.* From all danger.

*Capulchard.* [*Grasping the Girl*] Come!

[*He replaces the Girl inanimate among the Grotesques, right; then he returns to the Man, who now is alone on the stage, giving him a mantle and sword instead of a bow. As he does this, the Man, by a great unconscious effort, tries to reach towards her. Capulchard is surprised, but smiles ironically. The impulse dies.*]



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*Capulchard.* A mantle, then a sword: thus achieve strength,  
Intelligence, rank, power, and the rest  
That give a warrior capability  
To lead an army to a city's gates.  
And she, the daughter of his foe—

[*He lifts the Woman, giving her a costume that suggests a princess; and places her at the right edge of the decoration.*]

*Capulchard.* [*To the Man.*] Adjust to rhythm of the new design.

*Man.* The shout of battle has ceased from the darkened plain;  
Black swords now no more clash in a white sky.  
Here shall I rest till dawn, not victor while  
Their four-walled city holds unvanquished.

*Woman.* [*Holding out her hands towards him.*] Forth from the citadel I bear a gift.

*Man.* Would it were thou!

*Woman.* Desire as thou wilt.

[*To herself, of the city which love had tempted her to betray to him.*]

No longer am I peril of my realm.

No barrier lies between my will and me.

*Man.* Go!—lest that, weary after battle, I—

[*A pause, which leads to a new grouping.*]

*Man.* This bank shall be our bed,  
O my beloved!

*Woman.* This brook shall be the music of our night.





*Man.* The lotus shall yield wine,  
O my beloved!

*Woman.* Perfume of drowsiness—desire—

*Man.* Thou to the might of my love captive—

*Capulchard.* Translate the rhythm from their words to  
deeper silence.

None draw the erotic quite as Beardsley could.

Yet strange this governed transcript of a mood

They cannot feel, while you—. Disquietude?—

Sex-love? The theme's not false. Is it you prefer

Tang always? Well, then chance shall wreck their love.

*Woman.* Though I am lost, my realm I've not betrayed,  
By opening our strong-walled city's gates  
To bring thee—

*Man.* [*Forcing her from him, with a vitality of rhythmic  
line which suggests will-effort.*]

To thy realm thou shalt return.

Quick! lock thy beauty by a thousand bars,

That my one longing may give armies strength

To find my way to thee.

*Woman.* That strength is vain—  
The dawn shall tell them that from thee I come.

*Capulchard.* Disaster. Climax. Let us turn the page,  
New-motive her as Queen, the Man as one  
'Neath even her scorn, an Outlaw. Meanwhile, say:

*Woman.* The dawn shall tell them that from thee I  
come;

And they will send me forth an outcast, shamed.



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[*Capulchard with his hand touches her as she moves to the edge of the decoration, right.*]

What art thou? . . .

*Man.* Stay—I will spare thy realm.

*Woman.* Dawn blackens. . . . [*She falls inert.*]

*Capulchard.* [*After a pause.*] That every episode must  
this way end

Limits the rhythm like a clash of line,  
Breaking it by mere harsh irrelevance.

*Man.* She does not answer. Where?

*Capulchard.* An afterglow?

Searching? Interpret as avoiding search.

Thereby our Outlaw, fleeing.

*Man.* [*Uncertainly.*] They hunt me—Warrior . . .

Outlaw . . . She is lost . . . I . . .

*Capulchard.* [*Concealing apprehension.*] Let the theme  
Create me ex-officio spectre. Appear!

*Man.* [*Recoiling, in the grotesque manner, in response to a direct gesture from Capulchard.*]

What figure tense, dark-robed, phantom against the dark?

*Capulchard.* [*Resuming his mastery.*] The Outlaw, baffled  
in his strength, aghast

Stares—seemingly, since he is a Grotesque,

And by good fortune to his self-respect,

Insensible. But, with the tang you crave,

As I no less, being vicar, rhythm's restored.

*Man.* He speaks to someone.

*Capulchard.*

Ha!





Grotesques

*Man.* [*As before, vaguely, to himself.*] He speaks to someone.

*Capulchard.* Does the marionette grasp at its strings?

*Man.* [*Slowly and with effort, but turning directly towards Capulchard.*]

You speak—

*Capulchard.* [*To the Audience.*]

Howe'er this lead, exit waits poised  
Whereby to render him inert.

*Man.* [*With increasing persistence.*] You speak.

*Capulchard.* To those who see you make to disobey,  
Who come to observe that which you would resist,  
For whose regale the decoration's wrought—

The Audience.

*Man.* Gods! . . .

[*After a moment of indecision, he kneels slowly in an attitude of worship before Capulchard, at a distance from him.*]

*Capulchard.* Eh! what's this?

*Man.* Gods look upon us?—He has seen the gods!

*Capulchard.* I speak with them.

*Man.* [*Faltering.*] They answer?

*Capulchard.* [*After a pause.*] They are there.

*Man.* High priest!

*Capulchard.* [*To himself, not without self-consciousness.*]

True, I address the gods.

[*He steps aside.*]

*Man.* [*Left kneeling to vacancy, looks up.*] Vanished!

[*He rises, devoutly.*]



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'Tis holy ground: an altar I will raise!

*[He shapes the stones into a rude altar. Capulchard smiles, holding the design in rhythm.]*

I will give thanks unto our gods and plead  
Of them protection: I am their Grotesque;  
I will be strong and bold.

*Capulchard. [Placing the convention of fire on the altar.]*

Not strength from you,  
But cowardice, an Outlaw, they require.

*Man. [With proud fear.]* Hid in this forest at their  
will I lurk.

*Capulchard.* The courage of the willing sacrifice;  
The mannikin in uniform, his pride.

*[He goes right and, lifting the Woman, places upon her shoulders the white mantle of a Queen.]*

At the scene's edge, a crown upon her brow,  
She stands . . . Contrasted motives . . . Soon shall she  
Recoil in terror. Would you have her speak?

*[To the Woman.]*

I'll give you utterance of what you are.

*Woman.* A Woman—in her eyes the sign of grief;  
A Queen, who walks in solitude, gravely.  
Within her heart who knows what sorrows mourn?  
Who knows what sorrows still? . . . She comes.

*[She sees the Man and starts back, in a conventionalized movement, suggesting dread with her body. They look at one another. A silence. A change comes over the Woman. She closes her eyes.]*





I feel a strange unfolding as from sleep.  
Look at me, longer.

*Man.* You are beautiful.

*Woman.* Why do you cower from me? —

*Capulchard.* [*Without irony.*] Puppet Queen.

*Man.* [*Proudly.*] Ay; and the gods have me their Out-law made.

*Woman.* [*Re-acting to the decoration.*]

The dread of capture held his eyes to mine.

*Man.* I love.

*Woman.* That dagger bright wakes—

*Capulchard.* [*Dexterously.*] Fear. Perhaps,  
Conscious a bit, they might have further tang;  
There's naught more pliant than a little fire.

*Man.* [*Helplessly.*] 'Twas the gods' will—we've pleased  
them—they—

*Woman.* Alas, that I am royal!

*Man.* [*Harshly.*] Stay!

[*Capulchard makes a gesture that separates them.*]

*Woman.* [*With a gesture of great tenderness, gliding back  
repulses the Man.*]

[*The Man looks at Capulchard.*]

*Capulchard.* Turn not aside to ask the obvious.  
Are you not Outlaw?

*Man.* [*Trying to explain.*] Ay, the gods—the gods—

[*Capulchard does not answer, but places the Girl at the  
edge of the decoration, right. With a gesture he causes the*



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*Man, in conventionalized movement, to creep back into the forest, left.]*

*Capulchard.* There was a theme, had it been wise to risk,  
That for her he had slain the King; and she—

But no.

*Woman.* [*Who has started to speak to the Girl.*]

Such was I once: I will not wake her.

[*Exit the Woman, right. She falls inert.*]

*Capulchard.* [*Relaxing.*] However, now they are no  
more extant.

Dismiss them out of memory: behold,  
Amid the night-sounds of the forest, enter  
The Girl-motive.

*Girl.* [*Expressing fear.*] Only the cold white trees  
And the silver moon, and rippling thin at my feet,  
The slender glint of the zigzag brook,  
Clear waters fleet.

I, alone in the darkness, lost. Who  
Is that, tall—? Ah—

*Capulchard.* I'll hedge her with a storm!  
Uprise the rushing sound of wind.

*The Owl.* To-whoo!

*Girl.* An owl-cry!

*Capulchard.* Blunder storm-phantoms blind.

*The Owl.* To-whoo!

*Girl.* They scream!

*Capulchard.* 'Tis the rattle of branches.

*Girl.* Save me!



Grotesques

Capulchard.

Seek

Shelter.

*[He places a cloud-pattern across the moon.]*

Veil of the moonlight. Quick: ere the flashing streak,  
White fire, shall speed ignition to the clouds and form  
A fusion with their black genetic strength!

*[He abruptly unrolls a sharp white streak of lightning  
against the sky. With éclat.]*

The storm!

*[The Girl, with highly elaborated gestures expressing fear,  
sinks down. Capulchard takes the fire from the altar.  
Silence, to imply the presence of the storm.]*

Loud roars, through the thick-pouring rain, thunder.

*[At each imagined sound of thunder, she trembles.]*

Fears throng her heart, terror to her supplied  
By your fecund imagination.

Girl.

Oh,

Take down the storm!

Capulchard. Therein she doth abide

As in a fortress. Let the storm be past.

*[He takes the clouds and lightning down.]*

From shelter creep, symbols of forest things.

Girl. I now exclaim: Lead me hence, someone! help me!  
I am lost.

Capulchard. Footsteps, then.

Girl.

Hark!

Capulchard.

Of whom?





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[*Capulchard lifts the Crone, placing her at the left edge of the decoration.*]

I'll honor you with their attention.

[*As she hesitates through weariness.*] Forth.

Crone. I heard two voices, one of them a maid,  
If she be young enough. Where are you, dear?

[*Silence. She wanders toward the right, the Girl crossing, frightened, in rhythmic contrast.*]

I had these words to speak—are you afraid?—

About warm love: old age comes soon . . .

[*A pause.*]

I dare not leave the stream-side. She will learn.

Teach her, whoever it be.

Capulchard.

So—

Crone.

Capulchard?

[*Exit the Crone, right. She falls inert.*]

Girl. [*Designed as if frightened, but a little curious.*]

What would she teach?

Capulchard.

White cheeks to flame and burn

Till all their fire is dead.

Girl. [*Repeating.*] To flame and burn. . . .

[*Capulchard shrugs his shoulders; then, striding left, he takes a handful of water-drops from the brook and flings them into the sky beside the moon. They become seven conventionalized white stars.*]

Capulchard. A curtain cannot be: the play goes on;  
Scene follows scene, must follow without pause.



## Grotesques

[*He turns reluctantly to the Man, who lies inanimate outside the frame. Subtly, glancing at the Audience.*]

I'll put his consciousness in fealty.

[*He lifts the Man, clothes him in a monastic garb, and places him at the right edge of the decoration. In his hand he places an actual, brilliantly colored flower.*]

He shall forget the Woman-motive now.

Garbed mind has use: it keeps the scene intact.

*Man.* [*Sometimes intoning.*] Behold the ancient altar of this wood.

I cannot quite remember—yet there was  
Someone: it was not you.

*Capulchard.*                      *Though she is fair.*

*Man.* It seems I've journeyed here from far away,  
From distant plains, great cities, o'er a sea  
Where the waves are alternate black and white,  
And a black sun shines in a chalk-white sky  
Flecked by dark clouds and birds, black, soaring high;  
While over the sea ride chequered ships  
With white sail fastened to ebon mast.  
The ports they make are cities vast,  
With spires, minarets, and domes,  
All black and white.

Here first the very presence of the gods.

*Girl.* What have you in your hand?

*Man.*                                      *An offering.*

*Girl.* [*Standing very close to him and looking at the flower.*] This flower is not real like that one.



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[*Indicating the conventionalized lotus.*]

Man.

No; it lives.

Capulchard. The lotus is like time, misunderstood.

Girl. And here and there it's neither black nor white.

Man. I know not what that is, which came as I  
Fashioned the petals. Gift of the gods, a seal  
Of their benignity.

Girl.

I like the gods.

Man. [*Turning towards the Audience.*]

The gods watch over us, they guard us well;  
They have no other thought but for our good,  
And not a bird-sign falls but they behold it.  
Place now this flower humbly on their shrine;  
Your hands are pure and stainless as the light  
Reflected to the moon and seven stars.

Girl. You like my hands?

Man. [*His tone changing.*] Why do I find you here?

Capulchard. That theme has character; I'll give her words.

Girl. It is dark night, and I had lost my way.

But now that you are come, I do not care.

We are alone: the gods seemed so far off.

[*She takes the flower, crosses with delicate conventionalized movement to the right of the altar, and kisses the flower. She starts slightly, but does not speak until she has placed it on the altar.*]

The fragrance—withered.

Man. [*Not heeding his words.*] 'Twas acceptable.

Night and the stars, and silence in the wood.

And she—





Girl. What do you mean?

Man. I love you.

Girl. Then

You will not do me harm.

Capulchard. She creeps away.

[*The Man, gaining control of himself, kneels penitently beside the altar.*]

Somewhat a climax, if we quickly pass.

We'll take her off, though that is dangerous;

Scenes must progress.

[*The Girl creeps into the forest, right. Capulchard stands at the edge of the decoration as she falls inert. Presently the Man looks up. A pause.*]

Man. [*In remorse.*] Forgive me—oh, forgive!

I know that I shall never see her more.

Beyond this length of forest all is void.

How can the gods stand by and see so fair

And innocent a creature perish, yet

Raise not one hand to help her or restrain?

Do they snatch joy from her unhappiness?

[*Capulchard places the Woman at the right edge of the decoration.*]

Nay, they are gods: their silence must have cause—

Immortal life!

Woman. Death would not then be true.

[*The Man turns abruptly.*]

Man. Who are you that have strength to look at grief?

Woman. I know grief's pain, the memory's garnering.



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*Capulchard.* Swift let the past sweep backward from  
their ken,

Completed.

*Man.* They might will the past restored,  
Did we appeal, humbly. . . .

[*He looks in mute appeal towards the Audience. A  
pause. His hope breaks. Capulchard smiles.*]

*Capulchard.* The gods are kind, but wish to be amused.  
Obey the decoration: be not like  
The marionette who learned that there were strings  
And, seeking independence, severed them.

[*A silence. Capulchard has removed the monastic garb  
from the Man.*]

*Woman.* If I, knowing sorrow, could teach happiness—

*Capulchard.* Await the tang: their search will yield you  
tang.

Brief shall the scene be, so with stress designed.

*Man.* You were their answer.

*Woman.* Yes. [*She starts.*] Gods kill at last. . . .  
All moods of life in turn sweep through my heart.

Each sings a moment, passes, and is gone,  
Like winds of evening, winds of night, and dawn.

*Man.* Your heart is not inconstant—

*Woman.* Not my heart.

There is a mystery; I know there waits . . .

*Man.* Our love, deep-grounded in the roots of life,  
Eternal—

*Woman.* Flee: I bring unhappiness!



*Capulchard.* Has he learned not transcience? Let them weave the theme.

*Man.* One weapon—craft. We'll make our own design.

*Capulchard.* Shadows who'd swing the moon.

[*The Man draws her into a pose suggesting two lovers. This becomes the motive of the design.*]

*Man.* [*As, with a glance at Capulchard, she yields.*]  
Victory!

*Capulchard.* [*Surprised, grimly.*] How slight  
A breath would puff them pell-mell into space,  
And free the canvas for a different theme!

*Woman.* [*After a long pause.*]  
Seize in this one embrace our happiness;  
Swift to my lips!

*Capulchard.* [*Designing.*] Now, duty. What, n'importe!

*Woman.* [*Quietly, looking past the Man to Capulchard.*]  
I know that you must leave me.

*Man.* Now?

*Woman.* The while—  
That love may so be perfect; ere the gods  
Destroy; and return to—find—me—

[*They move to the right edge of the decoration.*]

Dearest . . .

*Man.* Wait . . .

[*He turns aside, left. She smiles, looking upward. Her smiles becomes ecstasy.*]

*Capulchard.* [*Abruptly.*] The tang!



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*[He touches her upon the shoulder. She steps quietly from the decoration. The Man turns. A very long silence. Capulchard watches the design with interest.]*

*Capulchard. [Filling the silence.] Dynamic.*

*[To the Man.]*

*In the will lies no redress.*

*[He grasps the lotus from the stream and offers it to the Man.]*

*Taste of the lotus; it's forgetfulness.*

*[The Man unconsciously, in deep thought, wanders into the forest, left.]*

*Capulchard. Thus ends revolt. If they should strive once more—[To the lotus.]*

*(Re-grasp the brooklet)—doubtless they will strive:*

*Nietzsche implies a Götterdämmerung;*

*Grotesques are something that must be surpassed.*

*But you, their gods, for whom they are create—*

*Ultimate critics in Olympian chairs—*

*Shall laugh at their weak struggle to be—gods?*

*Therefore, we'll give them incarnation now,*

*Though many interludes suggest themselves,*

*War-themes, the Lithuania—. We've warned.*

*[He takes the Woman from where she has fallen, right, and places her at the edge of the decoration. Speaking to the Audience, but she hearing.]*

*If still, untamed, they catch at the design,*

*First like a net it shall them close enmesh,*

*Then you may strike, almighty gods, by me.*

*Let her be Woman, Temptress; he—a Knight.*





[He places the Man, not in a knight's costume, at the left edge of the decoration. The Woman crouches at the right.]

Man. I wove a path here swiftly through the trees;  
Did not a voice call to the great white road  
In peril?

Woman. No.

Man. It was your voice I heard.

Woman. [Seeing the opportunity for a double rhythm.]  
Mine was a voice in silence crying, "Stay!"

Capulchard. [To her.] That misses character.

Man. The lifted voice  
Of all down-trodden pleads: "What right hath love?  
Save us!" And therefore I adventure forth  
With deep reluctance. We must part, bravely.

Woman. [To him, directly.]  
Part, that you may seek quest where search is vain,  
Beyond the decoration. . . .

Man. Your glory foredoomed ever to suborn!

Woman. Think not of that: yield if I tempt thee.

Capulchard. [Misinterpreting.] Good.

Man. False to ourselves?

Woman. The gods will welcome it;  
That gives their picture zest.

Capulchard. [With a look at the Audience.] They blas-  
pheme you.

Woman. Our honor, nay, our love, they have made sport  
To thrill them. I am set to tempt, that they



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May see you false, if yet our baffled love,

Again reincarnated, plead unslain.

There is no duty greater than our love.

Yield: let them relish it.

*Man.*

They'll hear us.

*Woman.*

Ay;

And let them. Cruel, they are powerless,

Except to gaze. You love me: let them gaze.

Why heed their laughter or their froth of tears?

*Man.* [*Indicating Capulchard.*] But—he—?

*Woman.* Their priest? He too seeks but design.

*Man.* [*Cynically, with elaborate care for the design.*]

I strive: my strife is futile, and I yield.

[*He reclines beside her.*]

You were alone.

*Woman.* I needed you so much.

[*After a pause.*]

We must have strength.

*Capulchard.* [*To the Audience.*] Enjoy: what reck their words,

So the design lead whither it was planned?

A little, and they forth shall fly in space,

After the manner of created things,

To plead you mercy: I will see to that.

*Man.* What does he mean?

*Woman.* [*Knowing well.*] It is some threat perhaps.

*Capulchard.* If we could draw remorse—

[*Going quickly to the right edge of the decoration.*]



## The Girl-motive.

Woman. My lover!

Man. We have found our buried life.

Fear not: they only see—what matter?

Capulchard. [*Designing.*] Voices . . .

Voices. [*Without.*] Come: we call. . . .

Man. No, No.

Woman. [*Muttering to him, as he glances at the Audience.*] Beyond is naught,

Except the gods.

Man. [*To her, terrified.*] Do you not feel their eyes—  
Eyes that stare, waiting? We were happy. . . .

Voices. [*Without.*] Come . . .

Capulchard. [*To the Audience.*]

They hear the voice, but only in your minds.

That was a symbol merely: this is—fact.

[*He has lifted the Girl, right. She stands for an instant; then, with conventionalized movement, turns towards the Man.*]

Girl. [*As always, controlled.*]

Alas, not lost, nor slain? Even that were best,

Rather than find you false to the gods' will.

They tell you to go forth. It might be you

Could save all decoration.

Woman. Save? Thereby . . .

Girl. [*Staccato.*]

His going would depict altruism.





POETRY: *A Magazine of Verse*

*Man.* [*To the Woman.*]

She does not know. Nor we—surely—

[*Looking towards the Girl almost in the manner of the early Grotesques.*]

Beyond

The decoration there is naught—that's real,

Except the gods . . .

*Capulchard.* [*Not without disappointment.*]

The good will conquer.

*Woman.* [*In passionate defiance.*] Us,

Our love, our life, for the pleasure of strengthless gods,

If there be—

[*She stops. The Man, with a conventionalized movement, is approaching the Girl. With a sharp cry.*]

No! it is revolt, concealed!

*Man.* Those ancient, staring eyes that will outlive

The moon and stars compel us to submit.

*Capulchard.* The puffed-up bubbles burst.

*Woman.* [*Looking toward Capulchard.*] Whatever we  
do

Ends as he planned.

*Man.* [*Apart.*] Once more, unhappiness.

*Woman.* [*To herself.*] Now we may conquer hope, and  
end all fear.

[*To the Man.*]

Unhappiness? I ask no less from them.

*Man.* [*After a moment.*]

What would you have me do?—I have betrayed

You, even her, our love. This, penance:



[Turning front.]

I

Am a Grotesque; we will no longer bow,  
The prey of gods!

[He destroys the altar. A pause.]

They have no answer—ha!—

Nor power. They can only stare. Hear,  
O ye gods who brought us into life,  
We fling defiance: give us freedom!

Girl. [Horror-struck.]

Oh! . . .

Capulchard. They shall have freedom, even as they wish.  
Freedom beyond their wish, freedom complete,  
And even the gods shall hesitate to laugh.  
We'll pause, merely to mend the broken rhythm.

Man. We must stand firm. . . . I cannot save you.

Woman.

No.

[Capulchard brings the Sprite from the right edge of the  
decoration. At Capulchard's direction, the Sprite bends to-  
wards the Girl.]

Girl. [As the Sprite seizes her.]

Ah, catch me not so!

Sprite. I have you for myself!

Capulchard. [With a glance at the Man.]

Thus far: forever, if there come no help.

[A silence that brings the design to complete stagnation.  
A pause. The lights of the auditorium are very slightly  
illuminated. A pause. The lights diminish and go out.]

Man. Mercy!—not mercy from them: hate!



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*Capulchard.* [*Himself awed, in a whisper.*]  
At last the gods!

[*Capulchard looks at the Grotesques. He smiles.*]  
What matter? Let the end be dexterous;  
Then to new canvas and a different theme.  
Backgrounds are many as the stars themselves;  
And these Grotesques would seek a wider range,  
A third dimension, something—infinite.

*Girl.* Pray to the gods.

*Woman.* [*Gently.*] Yes; offer them a prayer.

*Capulchard.* Now like a daemon of dread power, vast  
To their small eyes, but small to me myself,  
Lo, I take down the moon, erase the stars.

[*He does so. There is no less light.*]

*Man.* It is the end: I love you.

*Woman.*

We have loved.

*Capulchard.* Caught in the void: we'll sweep the canvas clear.

New decoration, say, by Alastair.

For naught is permanent—excepting change.

[*He tears away the background and goes out, leaving the stage a void filled by a strange diminishing light, which penetrates beyond into the surrounding nowhere—an emptiness in which the Grotesques, including the Crone, whom he flings forward with the others, move vaguely. A pause.*]

*Girl.* Have mercy upon us! . . .

[*A long silence. Curtain.*]

*Cloyd Head*



## NOTE ON GROTESQUES

Mr. Cloyd Head's brief tragedy, which we have the honor of presenting this month to our readers, was first produced on the evening of Tuesday, November sixteenth, 1915, at the Chicago Little Theatre; the director, Mr. Maurice Browne, enacting Capulchard. Our illustrations are from photographs of this production, and they are published through the courtesy of the Chicago Little Theatre.

The play ran three weeks, the initial cast being as follows:

*Capulchard* . . . . . Mr. Maurice Browne

*The Woman-motive* . Miss Gwendolen Foulke

*The Man-motive* . . . Mr. Knowles Entrekin

*The Girl-motive* . . . . Miss Miriam Kiper

*The Sprite-motive* . . . . Mr. Edward Balzerit

*The Crone-motive* . . . Miss Winifred Cutting

(In printing the play, the word *motive* has been omitted to avoid the monotony of repetition.)

As POETRY said editorially last January:

One could hardly say too much for the beauty of the presentation. But that was to be expected, for Mr. Browne, poet and dramatic artist that he is, is perhaps the only manager who could work out with complete delicacy the pictorial and theatrical subtleties of the theme. Already those of us who love the poetic drama are deeply in his debt.

An enthusiastic word should be added for the beauty of Mr. Raymond Johnson's part of the production. Scenically this play was a new and difficult problem, whose fit solution required a man of daring vision and delicate instinct for line and balance in decorative design. In many earlier Little





## POETRY: *A Magazine of Verse*

Theatre productions Mr. Johnson had shown rare ability and originality as a scenic designer, as well as extraordinary taste and ingenuity in producing new and strange effects with fixed or changing lights. *Grotesques* might have been ruined by a scenic artist less sensitive to conventionalized rhythms in background, costumes, and the posing of figures.

The author, the director, the assistant director (Mrs. Maurice Browne) and the scenic designer, all artists of creative and adventurous imagination, had the joy of working in perfect harmony, the vision of each inspired and fulfilled by the others. And the actors, thus led and inspired, worked in perfect harmony with these four, emphasizing, by every pose and intonation, the delicate conventionalized rhythms of action and dialogue.

The result was a memorable performance. If some of the spectators were disconcerted by the strangeness of it—unable to dissociate their minds from ordinary theatrical experiences so far as to enter into the poet's mood, others found in it that rarest and most poignant of all delights—an experience of complete poetic beauty, one never to be forgotten so long as life endures—or so long, perhaps, as art preserves her annals.

H. M.

The author adds the following word:

I wish to say two things with regard to this play: first, to add my own high appreciation of the artistry and insight which the Chicago Little Theatre brought to the making of the production; and, second, to ask the indulgence of the reader for certain obscurities inevitable to a play designed wholly for the theatre. The episodes are conceived as pantomime, the words being often a rhythm superimposed upon that pantomime.

C. H.



## EDITORIAL COMMENT

### THE FUTURE OF THE MAGAZINE



OUR years ago this month POETRY began. At that time the magazine was an experiment, a lone adventurer into a new field. A great art was neglected, even ridiculed; was in need of, not only a defender but an aggressive spokesman, an organ. Whether POETRY has fulfilled this function we will leave to its friends, or even to its enemies. The most casual observer cannot fail to admit the extent of the change during these four years, both in the spirit of the art and in its position before the critics and the public. And no informed person can fail to admit that the new movement, the new vitality, has been stimulated chiefly by this magazine and the currents of influence which have issued from it.

It is therefore a question of immediate importance whether the magazine is to continue after its initial period is over. The financial arrangement which made the experiment possible was a five-year guarantee fund of a little over five thousand dollars a year, donated to the cause by more than an hundred lovers of the art. This fund, which still amounts to more than one-half of our annual income, has enabled us to pay our contributors, and to keep abreast of office expenses, the rising cost of printing and paper, an ever-increasing correspondence, and all the incredibly numerous details of publication.





## POETRY: *A Magazine of Verse*

As a business enterprise, however, POETRY is as yet far from independent. Its annual reports to the guarantors have shown steady and sure progress, but progress too slow to put the enterprise on its feet by October, 1917. Indeed, the present editor thinks that financial independence should not be expected: poetry, like the other arts, deserves and requires not one but many endowments, and this particular endowment, far from diminishing, should grow, in order that the work, so enthusiastically begun, may be still more effectively carried on.

Many of our guarantors, under the generous impulse of this feeling, have already expressed a desire to continue their contributions for a few more years. Others, however, feel, rightly enough, that they have done their share; or, in some cases, even more than they could reasonably afford. We therefore appeal more generally to all lovers of the art, all who wish to encourage its production and promote its public appreciation and influence.

Will not YOU, therefore, become, by contributing ten dollars a year, a Supporting Subscriber of POETRY? Thousands of public-spirited citizens in our various cities pay that much, or far more, to support institutions of art, orchestral societies, architectural schools, etc.; and certain journals of political or social opinion have enrolled hundreds of Supporting Subscribers at the same rate. YOU are a lover of poetry: will you not do as much to support a magazine in its interest? A roll of five hundred Supporting Subscribers would contribute as much as one hundred Guarantors. Like



### *The Future of the Magazine*

the Guarantors, they will receive the magazine monthly, and once a year its report. We strongly urge YOU—each individual reader—to give us this evidence of your support.

If, however, you are not financially able to be either a Guarantor or a Supporting Subscriber, you can at least help in the good work by getting us one more subscriber. If each reader of POETRY will become a subscriber, and each subscriber will each year enroll one more, we shall be self-supporting before another five-year period shall have passed.

Do YOU wish POETRY to continue? Will YOU be partners with us in the effort to extend its life and increase its power?

H. M.

### THE CHINESE CHANTING OF THE CLASSICS

In one of Mr. Yeats' books—*Thoughts on Good and Evil* I think it is—he gives an account of the method of chanting poetry in use by the early Irish bards. These bards, he says, deliberately pitched the speaking, not the singing, voice in definite if irregular intervals. He illustrates it with a magical setting in this style of a short poem of his own from *Countess Kathleen*.

It is interesting to compare this method of Irish bards with the system of chanting the classics in China, a system which was doubtless in use before the days of St. Patrick and which flourishes among scholars today.







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## First Tune

Tshung siau ih khuh dzeh tshien kyung

Hwo yeu tshing hyang yoeh yeu iung.

Koo kwen leu de sung sien sien

Tshieu tshien yoen loh ye dzung dzung

## Second Tune

Tshung siau ih khuh dzeh tshien kyung

Hwo yeu tshing hyang yoeh yeu iung

Koo kwen leu de sung sien sien

Tshieu tshien yoen loh ye dzung dzung.

It will be seen that the rather complex rhythm scheme is identical in the two chants, and that they bear some general

## *The Chinese Chanting of the Classics*

thematic resemblance one to the other, although the details may vary infinitely, the same man singing the same poem differently at different times. The general effect of the monosyllables, each one of which is a word, is clear and nasal in quality, with the soft yet nasal *ng* sound of the French language much in evidence.

It is interesting to think of the probable effect on an Anglo-Saxon audience of reciting one of our own classical lyrics, say Herrick's *To Daisies, not to shut so soon*, in this oriental fashion. The "closeness of the Chinese soul", of which Carl Sandburg writes so assuredly, has decidedly its limitations.

*Eunice Tietjens*

### A JITNEY-BUS AMONG MASTERPIECES

A type of criticism coming into vogue lately is of the subjective or pseudo-impressionist variety, imitative of the leisurely mode of the mature minds of certain distinguished French critics. But the minds of those in this country who affect the method are anything but mature—in years or in experience. Having accepted as their motto Anatole France's remark that criticism is a soul's adventures among masterpieces, it does not occur to them that it may make some difference whether the soul is, or is not, well qualified for the adventure. I often feel, when reading such criticism, as if I had been asked to take a jitney-bus sight-seeing tour through a metropolis of masterpieces—or near-masterpieces, as it may happen. With these the guide is indifferently familiar, but *familiar* at any cost, and their *raison d'être* as







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political anemia, the poets have endured, have been the historians of their race.

The first poem, by a woman to her deported husband, is probably from the early eighteenth century:

Oh, my beloved, it is a dozen years since thou art gone.  
I commence to lose the features of thy face . . .  
I long to see thee again with mine own eyes;  
But during all the twelve months of the year  
Thou stayest yonder on the other side of the sea.  
I stretch out mine arms like a bridge  
On which thou may'st cross the ocean and return to me.

There have been women poets in Armenia, but their songs, during the last five hundred years, have been full of despair. An Armenian mother of the seventeenth century, in the following lullaby to her child, voices her own tragedy of subjection:

I sing a lullaby that in listening to  
Thou shalt lie down and sleep sweetly.  
Sleep, my child, and grow;  
Grow and become a great man  
Where there is no ruler. Be the ruler of thyself.  
Enlarge thyself and become a village,  
Become a dense forest  
Forcing thy roots to the foundations of the earth.  
Force thy roots into the foundations of the earth,  
And let thy trees cast all about thee  
The shadow of their branches.

Another poem, a quatrain in its original form, is of unknown date. During the seventeenth century a group of women living in Eghine in Turkish Armenia became celebrated for the gentle lyric melancholy of their verse, and this poem is attributed to that period:

He is not dead, thy son, he is not dead,  
He has gone away into the garden.

## Armenian Poetry

He has gathered roses, and in pressing them against his face  
Has been lulled into sleep by their soft perfume.

In Armenia the *trouvère* still fills the office of publisher to many poets, and by his singing in the streets of the villages and towns gives to the people the poetry of the nation. Djivani, who died only a few years ago, sang of his wandering brotherhood:

The *trouvère* is a bird without wings,  
Today here, tomorrow there.  
Sometimes devoured by hunger and by thirst,  
Again the favorite of fortune,  
He goes, he comes, never ceasing to roam.  
Today here, tomorrow there.  
He is, in the shadow, a shining wing,  
A cloud propelled by the wind.  
In quest of vain hopes  
Djivani stops nowhere  
In cities or villages—  
Today here, tomorrow there.  
Until his death he will live thus  
Fluttering about as a bee,  
Today here, tomorrow there.

Kate Buss

## REVIEWS

### POET AND THEORIST

*Goblins and Pagodas*, by John Gould Fletcher. Houghton Mifflin Co.

Of the first poem of this volume, *The Ghosts of an Old House*, Mr. Fletcher says in his preface:

I have tried to evoke, out of the furniture and surroundings of a certain old house, definite emotions which I have had concerning them. I have tried to relate my childish terror concerning this house . . . to the aspects that called it forth.

[43]







## POETRY: *A Magazine of Verse*

Amid the monotonous hills:  
Desolation of the old gods,  
Rain that lifts and rain that moves away;  
In the green black torrent  
Scarlet leaves.

But, except always for the first and third symphonies, Mr. Fletcher goes, in these poems, where I, for one, find it irksome to follow. It is not that he loses the gist in the image, as some wag has said "these imagists" do, but in a wild concatenation of images, in which adjectives play too insistent and meticulous a part, especially those denoting color. Sometimes for pages, it seems, he allows no noun to appear without its blue-white, gray-green, strong red. To me, even after a repeated use of the guide in the preface, these dramas of the soul in terms of color lack life and motion, become turgid, and dry almost to choking. The artist "runs out like the wind," "no one can hold him," "races between the gray guns"; birds fan him with hot winds; rugged waves of blue-black water lash him, lap him, dash him, do not let him rest a minute; a howling sunset, a shrieking storm assail him; fierce whirling swords spit and stab; his lungs and heart fight for air; appalling scarlet sears his eyes. And yet with all this, one only gets the sensation that dreams give, of violent effort and no progress. To borrow from Frank Tinney, Mr. Fletcher "put it over, and it lay there."

I wonder if this failure is not due to a courting of the impossible, if he has not sought to build a system out of too elusive intuitions, and so has foundered in abstractions. The same tendency to depart from the concrete is apparent in his prefacing discussion of poetry—a tendency to generalize,

*Poet and Theorist*

which, Blake bluntly says, is to be an idiot. He tells us, for example, with an eye always to modernity, that "no sincere artist cares to handle subject matter already handled and exhausted," forgetting that Æschylus, Euripides and Sophocles made use of the same ancient stories, and that anyway, manner and matter being inseparable, talk of "subject matter" is not pertinent.

Wouldn't it be well for the poet to leave to the litterateur all this solemn elation over "the new art," "the new poetry," "the new technique"? Why worry about it? The great artist inevitably is neither conventional nor hackneyed; lesser men are certain to echo him, and then follow the echoes of the echo, and so on to emptiness. Why clamor and admonish? The story will remain the same—great art always unsolvably old and new, as established as mathematics, as surprising as the spring. Possibly some one of "the new school" is already echoing Mr. Fletcher, and some of his verses distinctly owe their piquancy to the old device of rhyme:

Owls flap in this ancient barn  
With rotted doors.

Rats squeak in this ancient barn  
Over the floors.

Owls flap in this ancient barn  
Rats' eyes gleam in the cold moonlight.

There is something hidden in this barn  
With barred doors;

Something the owls have torn,  
And the rats scurry with over the floors.

*Dorothy Dudley*

## POETRY: *A Magazine of Verse*

### A SOLDIER POET

*Le Prisonnier des Mondes*, par Jean Le Roy. Société d'Éditions Mansi et Cie., Paris.

Amid the masses of to-day's poetry of detail heaped high on every editorial desk, from an ode to an egg-shell found in an alley, to reflections upon suspenders hanging in a shop window, it is at least a change to come upon *Le Prisonnier des Mondes*, by Jean Le Roy, one of the younger French poets and a soldier who took part in the great offensive in Champagne. This poet signals to us from high places. His themes are the elements, which possess him, whirl him about, till he is occasionally in danger of losing his balance. True, he may write about a tramway; but he is less concerned with the tramway than with what he sees from it—fleeting houses, landscapes. He likes to write of the open, with its sounds and sights, and does not tire of looking at life, which builds of cells wonderful animate structures. He handles cosmic laws vastly and impersonally. Must these great facts be always related to the human, the personal, in poetry? I think not. Poems of nature, when they are warmed by the human appeal, are perhaps those most lingered over; yet it is good to feel the wide coldness of the elemental forces. Not that Le Roy's work is heedless of the human pulse; but he sees in the heart of a man the heart of all creation.

*Instant de Clarté*, the opening poem in the little paper-bound book, whose titles, all told, number only eight, is interesting from a wide point of view:

Je sens, comme un fantôme,  
Derrière moi,  
Un homme  
Plus grand que moi  
Et qui pèse sur mes épaules;  
Et puis derrière, un autre;  
Et puis, derrière celui-là  
D'autres hommes échelonnés;  
Et puis, toujours plus grands, des géants en sommeil  
Qui de moins en moins éclairés  
Par le soleil,  
Se reculent dans l'ombre:  
Mes ancêtres depuis les premiers temps du monde.

This will make you want to go on. The poet sees, now before him, others, small at first, then smaller, dwindling to smaller still, and others, ever others, who are his son and his son's sons. They fall asleep in the past or plunge into the future, till at last there is but one existing conscious being—himself. As in the foregoing quotation, throughout his poems Le Roy uses rhyme.

*Danse des Globes* is beautiful with sounding language, though it may contain a few misapplied pictures. We like to accept this invitation at the outset: "Let us ascend into the oak-trees, the oak-trees, balmy as houses, by the twisted stairway of branches; let us ascend in the whiteness of evening, let us gather on the flat roofs of evening, as gathered the herds of Chaldea." And behold, we find ourselves amid the rolling and crackling of worlds:

Et nous, ainsi que des pâtres de la Chaldée,  
Nous regardons danser, nous écoutons la danse  
Des globes,  
La pluie des globes autour de la terre, \nFille endormie qui rêve parmi l'azur,  
En tremblant, d'une folle chute!

## POETRY: *A Magazine of Verse*

L. Roy has written poems not contained in this volume. I have seen some of his trench poems, and they all reflect the strength and sincerity of one who really knows. In *La Chair et l'Acier*, which was printed in the *New Republic* for June 10, 1916, the poet draws a striking contrast. He describes the days when a young man felt pleasure and pride in his muscles, as he trod the smooth pavements of Paris, or swam in pleasant waters, not yet conscious of the frailty of his own body; and then he pictures the days of a bombardment. Now at last he apprehends flesh, flesh that could once shiver luxuriously at a beautiful strain of music, or thrill with delight at some dear memory. He describes with the bold truth of an artist in words the pitiless steel as it cuts with monstrous ease into lithe, white, adolescent flesh:

Jeunes corps confiants jadis  
Sur le bitume de Paris.

But even lovelier is this poem, which we quote entire, as it will be new to our readers, having been printed only in an extremely limited edition of a rough little trench paper:

### PRINTEMPS

Des pétales jeunes, frêles, lisses,  
Pleuvent sur un coin d'ombre du tennis.  
Dans une allée, les jeunes filles ont oublié  
Leurs chapeaux de jardin.

Vous nous gênez, les fusains,  
Nous qui jouons au croquet,  
Vêtus de bleu, soldats français.

Dans ce printemps très clair où le canon s'entend,  
Nous sommes là, dans ce printemps,

## *A Soldier Poet*

Jouant ensemble  
(Et l'azur tremble),  
Nous sommes là, jouant ensemble,  
L'employé du Crédit Lyonnais,  
Le tourneur et le professeur,  
Le carreleur  
Le mécano et le typo,  
Les deux petits merlans  
Et moi aussi, dans ce printemps.

Les minutes pleuvent lentement  
Comme les jeunes pétales blancs,  
Comme les bombes à l'horizon.

Et c'est ainsi que va le temps  
Plus précieux que les autres temps,  
Celui qu'il faudrait arrêter  
Pour l'écouter et pour le voir passer de près,  
Non parce qu'un cœur à jamais  
Pleurera sa fuite  
Comme en son vieux parc Olympio  
Ou Lamartine au bord de l'eau,  
Mais parce qu'au bruit lointain des obus qui se cassent,  
Ardente, étonnante, rapide,  
L'histoire du monde se passe.

Jean Le Roy's work shows us what fine flowers are lifting  
their loveliness to the scythe of war. A. F.

### A STACCATO POET

*Mushrooms: a Book of Free Forms*, by Alfred Kreymborg.  
John Marshall Co., Ltd., New York.

An insinuating, meddlesome, quizzical, inquiring spirit;  
sometimes a clown, oftener a wit, now and then a lyric poet—  
such is the author of this book. He trips about cheerfully  
among life's little incongruities; laughs at you and me and  
progress and prejudice and dreams; says "I told you so!"  
with an air, as if after a double somersault in the circus ring;

## POETRY: *A Magazine of Verse*

grows wistful, even tender, with emotions always genuine even though not too deep for momentary tears. And always, whatever his mood, whatever his subject or purpose, he is, as becomes the harlequin-philosopher, entertaining.

Mr. Kreymborg's "free forms" suit his temperament, and they accompany his thought fitly, with the delicate aplomb of a ukulele. As a rule they are extremely *staccato*, a movement that tires if one reads too many, though usually any incipient yawn turns into a smile. Who could resist the deftness of this bit of consummate wit—an epigram called *Life?*

I met four guinea-hens today,  
Creaking like pulleys.

"A crrk," said one;  
"A crrk," said two;  
"A crrk," said three;  
"A crrk," said four.

I agree with you cheerfully, ladies.

And here is another from the same laughing philosopher:

Tiny boy,  
staring at me  
with eyes like toy balloons:  
That broom is much bigger than you—  
put it down.  
You won't?  
Then don't put it down.

And I should like to quote also the divertingly true *I am four monkeys*; but that is already almost famous.

Are these poetry? Why not? Did not Horace write satires long ago, and successfully "put them over" with the Romans—yes, and with sober-minded professors of Latin



even to our own day? Are these not as much poetry as Pope's diffuse and ingeniously rhymed satirical skits, which were gulped down, though with wry faces, by the "wits and beaux" of that "Augustan age"? Is there no room for satire in modern poetic art? "Because thou art virtuous, shall there be no more cakes and ale?"

I own it doth amaze me to hear some critics solemnly reading the law against Messrs. Kreymborg, Eliot, Pound, and others whenever they indulge in contemporary satire. As if the muse must always march grandly to heroic tunes, or dance to approved classic measures, and never while away a more intimate hour, to steps of her own devising, among our own hidden and cherished frailties! These poets are witty in a modern fashion. They give us satirical verse of a kind more fit for our telegraphic age than Horace's sententious periods or Pope's ingenious couplets; but verse as well entitled to be called poetry as theirs in this kind.

I do not mean that Mr. Kreymborg is always a satirist. Even in his most serious moods, however, he keeps his light touch-and-go manner and his telegraphic, almost telescopic, style. His "free forms" are not always so good a fit for the serious as for the whimsical mood; their rhythms become as obvious in their way as certain familiar hymns are in theirs. But sometimes he does a thing worthy of that over-used adjective, exquisite, like this wistful *Dance*:

Moon dance,  
You were not to blame.  
Nor you,  
lovely white moth.  
But I saw you together.

## POETRY: *A Magazine of Verse*

Again, as in one or two of the group *To My Mother*, a feeling delicately tender is set to soft music. *Entity* perhaps came by wireless, yet I find it not quite unworthy of the muse:

I am.  
And you.  
And atoms.  
Censure?  
Forgiveness?  
Why?

I should like to quote *America*, which rather bravely suggests the big swinging march of a young nation, but I must stop with one more, and that one a portrait, *Cézanne*:

Our door was shut to the noon-day heat.  
We could not see him.  
We might not have heard him either—  
resting, dozing, dreaming pleasantly.  
But his step was tremendous—  
are mountains on the march?

He was no man who passed,  
but a great faithful horse  
dragging a load  
up the hill.

H. M.

### SOUTHERN SONGS

*Plantation Songs and Other Verse*, by Ruth McEnery Stuart. D. Appleton & Co.

These are negro dialect songs of the best type, gay, humorous, rollicking and tender, full of sympathy and rioting with color. It is safe to predict that some of these, for their human qualities of mirth and patience, will be chanted and

## Southern Songs

loved in nooks and corners of the earth for many a long year. If Mrs. Stuart's place were not already secure this book alone would endear her to the hearts of the people.

Her serious poems, for the most part devotional, are unfortunately not so successful as the plantation songs. The best of these, *Sitting Blind by the Sea*, is already familiar to readers of POETRY.

But Uncle Remus himself might have written the negro songs!  
E. T.

### NOTES

Mr. Cloyd Head, author of *Grotesques*, was born in Illinois in 1886, and has lived for the past fifteen years in suburbs of Chicago. He is a graduate of the Northwestern University, of Evanston, Illinois.

Mr. Head is an unusually self-exacting artist. He has written poems and plays before the one now published, but, with rare austerity, has destroyed them. He is now engaged upon another poetic play, also symbolic, and also adventurous in its demands upon scenic art.

### BOOKS RECEIVED

#### ORIGINAL VERSE:

*The Garden of the Idle Mind*, by Isabel Moore. Privately printed.

*The Roof of the World and Other Poems*, by Henry G. Barnett. Sherman, French & Co.

*The Little God*, by Katharine Howard. Sherman, French & Co.

*Lundy's Lane and Other Poems*, by Duncan Campbell Scott. George H. Doran Co.

*Today and Yesterday*, by Irving J. A. Miller. The Blakely-Oswald Co., Chicago.

*Five Rimes of Five Nations in Time of War*, by Allen Updegraff. Printed by the Maverick Press, to be sold for the benefit of Belgium.

*Untravelled Trails*, by Howard Hilles. Sherman, French & Co.

*Heart Songs and Home Songs*, by Denis A. McCarthy. Little, Brown & Co.

## POETRY: *A Magazine of Verse*

*Red Wing*, by Frank S. Farquhar. Privately Printed, Planda, Cal.  
*Life and Living*, by Amelia Josephine Burr. George H. Doran Co.  
*A Little Book of Verses*, by Violet Leigh. Fremad Pub. Co., Eau Claire, Wis.

*Collected Poems*, by Arthur Peterson. G. P. Putman's Sons.

*Tragedies*, by Arthur Symons. The John Lane Co.

*Songs of Daddyhood and Other Poems*, by Albert Edmund Trombly. Gorham Press.

*There Was a Time*, by Anne Murray Larned. Richard G. Badger.

*Journeys of a Soul*, by Nathan Appleton Tefft. The Gorham Press.

*Random Verse*, by F. W. B. The Poet-lore Co.

*Law and Love and Other Poems*, by E. J. V. Huiginn. The Gorham Press.

*The Golden Treshold*, by Sarojini Naidu. The John Lane Co.

*Doreen and The Sentimental Bloke*, by C. J. Dennis. John Lane Co.

*A Place in the Sun*, by George William Allison. Riverside Pub. Co., South Bend, Ind.

*The Caliph's Secret and Other Verses*, by M. A. B. Evans. G. P. Putman's Sons.

### PLAYS:

*Layla-Majnu: A Musical Play in Three Acts*, by Dhan Gopal Mukerji. Paul Elder & Co., San Francisco.

### SPECIAL EDITIONS, ANTHOLOGIES AND TRANSLATIONS:

*The Sonnets of Shakespeare: from the Quarto of 1609 with Variorum Readings and Commentary*, Edited by Raymond Macdonald Alden. Houghton Mifflin Co.

*The Cambridge Book of Poetry for Children*, selected and edited by Kenneth Grahame. G. P. Putman's Sons.

*Heine's Poem, The North Sea*, Translated by Howard Mumford Jones. The Open Court Pub. Co., Chicago.

### PROSE:

*Studies of Contemporary Poets*, by Mary C. Sturgeon. Dodd, Mead & Co.

NOVEMBER, 1916

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SNOW



HE three stood listening to a fresh access  
Of wind that caught against the house a moment,  
Gulped snow, and then blew free again—the  
Coles,  
Dressed, but dishevelled from some hours of sleep,  
Meserve belittled in the great skin coat he wore.

Meserve was first to speak. He pointed backward  
Over his shoulder with his pipe-stem, saying,  
“You can just see it glancing off the roof,  
Making a great scroll upward toward the sky,  
Long enough for recording all our names on.  
I think I’ll just call up my wife and tell her  
I’m here—so far—and starting on again.  
I’ll call her softly so that if she’s wise  
And gone to sleep, she needn’t wake to answer.”

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## POETRY: *A Magazine of Verse*

Three times he barely stirred the bell, then listened.  
"Why, Lett, still up? Létt, I'm at Cole's. I'm late.  
I called you up to say good-night from here  
Before I went to say good-morning there. . . .  
I thought I would . . . I know, but Lett—I know . . .  
I could, but what's the sense? The rest won't be  
So bad . . . Give me an hour for it . . . Ho ho,  
Three hours to here! But that was all up hill;  
The rest is down . . . Why no, no, not a wallow;  
They kept their heads and took their time to it,  
Like darlings, both of them. They're in the barn. . . .  
My dear, I'm coming just the same; I didn't  
Call you to ask you to invite me home."

He lingered for some word she wouldn't say,  
Said it at last himself, "Good-night," and then,  
Getting no answer, closed the telephone.  
The three stood in the lamplight round the table  
With lowered eyes a moment till he said,  
"I'll just see how the horses are."

"Yes, do,"

Both the Coles said together. Mrs. Cole  
Added: "You can judge better after seeing. . . .  
I want you here with me, Fred. Leave him here,  
Brother Meserve. You know to find your way  
Out through the shed."

"I guess I know my way.  
I guess I know where I can find my name

Carved in the shed to tell me who I am  
If it don't tell me where I am. I used  
To play—"

"You tend your horses and come back.  
Fred Cole, you're going to let him!"

"Well, aren't you?

How can you help yourself?"

"I called him Brother.

Why did I call him that?"

"It's right enough.

That's all you ever heard him called round here.  
He seems to have lost off his Christian name."

"Christian enough I should call that myself.  
He took no notice, did he? Well, at least  
I didn't use it out of love of him,  
The dear knows. I detest the thought of him—  
With his ten children under ten years old.  
I hate his wretched little Racker Sect,  
All's ever I heard of it, which isn't much.  
But that's not saying—Look, Fred Cole, it's twelve,  
Isn't it, now? He's been here half an hour.  
He says he left the village store at nine:  
Three hours to do four miles—a mile an hour  
Or not much better. Why, it doesn't seem  
As if a man could move that slow and move.  
Try to think what he did with all that time.  
And three miles more to go!"

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"Don't let him go.

Stick to him, Helen. Make him answer you.  
That sort of man talks straight on all his life  
From the last thing he said himself, stone deaf  
To anything anyone else may say.  
I should have thought, though, you could make him hear  
you."

"What is he doing out a night like this?  
Why can't he stay at home?"

"He had to preach."

"It's no night to be out."

"He may be small,  
He may be good, but one thing's sure, he's tough."

"And strong of stale tobacco."

"He'll pull through."

"You only say so. Not another house  
Or shelter to put into from this place  
To theirs. I'm going to call his wife again."

"Wait, and he may. Let's see what he will do.  
Let's see if he will think of her again.  
But then I doubt he's thinking of himself—  
He doesn't look on it as anything."

"He shan't go—there!"

"It is a night, my dear."

"One thing: he didn't drag God into it."

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"He don't consider it a case for God."

"You think so, do you? You don't know the kind.  
He's getting up a miracle this minute.  
Privately, to himself, right now, he's thinking  
He'll make a case of it if he succeeds,  
But keep still if he fails."

"Keep still all over.

He'll be dead—dead and buried."

"Such a trouble!

Not but I've every reason not to care  
What happens to him if it only takes  
Some of the sanctimonious conceit  
Out of one of those pious scalawags."

"Nonsense to that! You want to see him safe."

"You like the runt."

"Don't you a little?"

"Well,

I don't like what he's doing, which is what  
You like, and like him for."

"Oh, yes you do.

You like your fun as well as anyone;  
Only you women have to put these airs on  
To impress men. You've got us so ashamed  
Of being men we can't look at a good fight  
Between two boys and not feel bound to stop it.

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Let the man freeze an ear or two, I say.  
He's here—I leave him all to you. Go in  
And save his life. . . . All right, come in, Meserve.  
Sit down, sit down. How did you find the horses?"

"Fine, fine."

"And ready for some more? My wife here  
Says it won't do. You've got to give it up."

"Won't you, to please me? Please! If I say please?  
Mr. Meserve, I'll leave it to *your* wife.  
What *did* your wife say on the telephone?"

Meserve seemed to heed nothing but the lamp  
Or something not far from it on the table.  
By straightening out and lifting a forefinger,  
He pointed with his hand from where it lay  
Like a white crumpled spider on his knee:  
"That leaf there in your open book! It moved  
Just then, I thought. It's stood erect like that,  
There on the table, ever since I came,  
Trying to turn itself backward or forward—  
I've had my eye on it to make out which:  
If forward, then it's with a friend's impatience—  
You see I know—to get you on to things  
It wants to see how you will take; if backward,  
It's from regret for something you have passed  
And failed to see the good of. Never mind,

Things must expect to come in front of us  
A many times—I don't say just how many,  
That varies with the things—before we see them.  
One of the lies would make it out that nothing  
Ever presents itself before us twice.  
Where would we be at last if that were so?  
Our very life depends on everything's  
Recurring till we answer from within.  
The thousandth time may prove the charm. That leaf!  
It can't turn either way. It needs the wind's help.  
But the wind didn't move it if it moved;  
It moved itself. The wind's at naught in here.  
It couldn't stir so sensitively poised  
A thing as that. It couldn't reach the lamp  
To get a puff of black smoke from the flame,  
Or blow a rumple in the collie's coat.  
You make a little foursquare block of air,  
Quiet and light and warm, in spite of all  
The illimitable dark and cold and storm,  
And by so doing give these three—lamp, dog,  
And book-leaf—that keep near you, their repose;  
Though for all anyone can tell, repose  
May be the thing you haven't, yet you give it.  
So false it is that what we haven't we can't give;  
So false, that what we always say is true.  
I'll have to turn the leaf if no one else will.  
It won't lie down. Then let it stand. Who cares?"

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"I shouldn't want to hurry you, Meserve,  
But if you're going—Say you'll stay, you know?  
But let me raise this curtain on a scene,  
And show you how it's piling up against you.  
You see the snow-white through the white of frost?  
Ask Helen how far up the sash it's climbed  
Since last we read the gage."

"It looks as if  
Some pallid thing had squashed its features flat,  
And its eyes shut with overeagerness  
To see what people found so interesting  
In one another, and had gone to sleep  
Of its own stupid lack of understanding,  
Or broken its white neck of mushroom stuff  
Short off, and died against the window-pane."

"Brother Meserve, take care, you'll scare yourself  
More than you will us with such nightmare talk.  
It's you it matters to, because it's you  
Who have to go out into it alone."

"Let him talk, Helen, and perhaps he'll stay."

"Before you drop the curtain—I'm reminded:  
You recollect the boy who came out here  
To breathe the air one winter—had a room  
Down at the Avery's? Well, one sunny morning  
After a downy storm, he passed our place

And found me banking up the house with snow.  
And I was burrowing in deep for warmth,  
Piling it well above the window-sills.  
The snow against the window caught his eye.  
'Hey, that's a pretty thought'—those were his words.  
'So you can think it's six feet deep outside,  
While you sit warm and read up balanced rations.  
You can't get too much winter in the winter.'  
Those were his words. And he went home and all  
But banked the daylight out of Avery's windows.  
Now you and I would go to no such length.  
At the same time you can't deny it makes  
It not a mite worse, sitting here, we three,  
Playing our fancy, to have the snow-line run  
So high across the pane outside. There where  
There is a sort of tunnel in the frost  
More like a tunnel than a hole—way down  
At the far end of it you see a stir  
And quiver like the frayed edge of the drift  
Blown in the wind. I *like* that—I like *that*.  
Well, now I leave you, people."

"Come, Meserve,

We thought you were deciding not to go—  
The ways you found to say the praise of comfort  
And being where you are. You want to stay."

"I'll own it's cold for such a fall of snow.  
This house is frozen brittle, all except

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This room you sit in. If you think the wind  
Sounds further off, it's not because it's dying;  
You're further under in the snow—that's all—  
And feel it less. Hear the soft bombs of dust  
It bursts against us at the chimney mouth,  
And at the eaves. I like it from inside  
More than I shall out in it. But the horses  
Are rested and it's time to say good-night,  
And let you get to bed again. Good-night,  
Sorry I had to break in on your sleep."

"Lucky for you you did. Lucky for you  
You had us for a half-way station  
To stop at. If you were the kind of man  
Paid heed to women, you'd take my advice  
And for your family's sake stay where you are.  
But what good is my saying it over and over?  
You've done more than you had a right to think  
You could do—*now*. You know the risk you take  
In going on."

"Our snow-storms as a rule  
Aren't looked on as man-killers, and although  
I'd rather be the beast that sleeps the sleep  
Under it all, his door sealed up and lost,  
Than the man fighting it to keep above it,  
Yet think of the small birds at roost and not  
In nests. Shall I be counted less than they are?  
Their bulk in water would be frozen rock

In no time out to-night. And yet to-morrow  
They will come budding boughs from tree to tree  
Flirting their wings and saying Chicadee,  
As if not knowing what you meant by the word storm."

"But why, when no one wants you to go on?  
Your wife—she doesn't want you to. We don't,  
And you yourself don't want to. Who else is there?"

"Save us from being cornered by a woman!  
Well, there's"—She told Fred afterward that in  
The pause right there, she thought the dreaded word  
Was coming, "God." But no, he only said,  
"Well, there's—the storm. That says I must go on.  
That wants me as a war might if it came.  
Ask any man."

He threw her that as something  
To last her till he got outside the door.  
He had Cole with him to the barn to see him off.  
When Cole returned he found his wife still standing  
Beside the table near the open book,  
Not reading it.

"Well, what kind of a man  
Do you call that?" she said.

"He had the gift  
Of words, or is it tongues I ought to say?"

"Was ever such a man for seeing likeness?"

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"Or disregarding people's civil questions—  
What? We've found out in one hour more about him  
Than we had seeing him pass by in the road  
A thousand times. If that's the way he preaches!  
You didn't think you'd keep him after all.  
Oh, I'm not blaming you. He didn't leave you  
Much say in the matter, and I'm just as glad  
We're not in for a night of him. No sleep  
If he had stayed. The least thing set him going.  
It's quiet as an empty church without him."

"But how much better off are we as it is?  
We'll have to sit here till we know he's safe."

"Yes, I suppose you'll want to, but I shouldn't.  
He knows what he can do, or he wouldn't try.  
Get into bed I say, and get some rest.  
He won't come back, and if he telephones,  
It won't be for an hour or two."

"Well then—  
We can't be any help by sitting here  
And living his fight through with him, I suppose."

. . . . .

Cole had been telephoning in the dark.

Mrs. Cole's voice came from an inner room:  
"Did she call you or you call her?"



"She me.

You'd better dress—you won't go back to bed.  
We must have been asleep—it's three and after."

"Had she been ringing long? I'll get my wrapper—  
I want to speak to her."

"All she said was,  
He hadn't come, and had he really started."

"She knew he had, poor thing, two hours ago."

"He had the shovel. He'll have made a fight."

"Why did I ever let him leave this house!"

"Don't begin that. You did the best you could  
To keep him—though perhaps you didn't quite  
Conceal a wish to see him show the spunk  
To disobey you. Much his wife'll thank you."

"Fred, after all I said! You shan't make out  
That it was any way but what it was.  
Did she let on by any word she said  
She didn't thank me?"

"When I told her 'Gone,'  
'Well, then,' she said, and 'Well then'—like a threat.  
And then her voice came scraping slow: 'Oh, you,  
Why did you let him go?'"

"Asked why we let him?  
You let me there. I'll ask her why she let him.

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She didn't dare to speak when he was here.  
Their number's—twenty-one? The thing won't work.  
Someone's receiver's down. The handle stumbles.  
The stubborn thing, the way it jars your arm!  
It's theirs. She's dropped it from her hand and gone."

"Try speaking. Say, 'Hello.'"

"Hello, hello."

"What do you hear?"

"I hear an empty room—  
You know—it sounds that way. And yes, I hear—  
I think I hear a clock—and windows rattling.  
No step though. If she's there she's sitting down."

"Shout, she may hear you."

"Shouting is no good."

"Keep speaking then."

"Hello. Hello. Hello.  
You don't suppose—? She wouldn't go out-doors?"

"I'm half afraid that's just what she might do."

"And leave the children?"

"Wait and call again.  
You can't hear whether she has left the door  
Wide open, and the wind's blown out the lamp,  
And the fire's died, and the room's dark and cold?"

"One of two things, either she's gone to bed  
Or gone out-doors."

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"In which case both are lost.  
Do you know what she's like? Have you ever met her?  
It's strange she doesn't want to speak to us."

"Fred, see if you can hear what I hear. Come."

"A clock, maybe."

"Don't you hear something else?"

"Not talking."

"No."

"Why, yes, I hear—what is it?"

"What do you say it is?"

"A baby's crying!"

"Frantic it sounds though muffled and far off."

"Its mother wouldn't let it cry like that,  
Not if she's there."

"What do you make of it?"

"There's only one thing possible to make—  
That is, assuming that she has gone out.  
Of course she hasn't, though."

They both sat down  
Helpless. "There's nothing we can do till morning."

"Fred, I shan't let you think of going out."

"Hold on." The double bell began to chirp.  
They started up. Fred took the telephone.

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"Hello, Meserve. You're there, then! And your wife? . . .  
Good! Why I asked—she didn't seem to answer. . . .  
He says she went to let him in the barn. . . .  
We're glad. Oh, say no more about it, man.  
Drop in and see us when you're passing."

"Well,  
She has him then, though what she wants him for  
I *don't* see."

"Possibly not for herself.  
Maybe she only wants him for the children."

"The whole to-do seems to have been for nothing.  
What spoiled our night was to him just his fun.  
What did he come in for? To talk and visit?  
Thought he'd just call to tell us it was snowing.  
If he thinks he is going to make our house  
A half-way coffee-house 'twixt town and nowhere—"

"I thought you'd feel you'd been too much concerned."

"You think you haven't been concerned yourself."

"If you mean he was inconsiderate  
To rout us out to think for him at midnight  
And then take our advice no more than nothing,  
Why, I agree with you. But let's forgive him.  
We've had a share in one night of his life.  
What'll you bet he ever calls again?"

*Robert Frost*

TO W. J. C.

*October 5th, 1848—September 19th, 1916*

Why is it, when they wreath about your name  
Garlands of praise—cry soldier, diplomat,  
Lover of justice, statesman; and enrich  
The pillage of their hearts with bitter tears  
For your great heart that beats no more—  
Why do I see only that tilt of the lip  
And gleam of the eyes, the sudden whimsical smile  
That used to break the grand lines of your face?—  
And hear only some little tender word,  
Some love-joke tripping up our futile pride  
With doubt of human grandeur?

Sweet—oh, brave!

Oh, brave and sweet through the strange sun-shot maze  
You passed unwavering—holding out your hands  
To give and bless, freeing your eager mind  
In warm bold words, opening wide your eyes  
To see the light, follow the clearing path  
Out to great spaces.

Go—go forth! They win you.

I see you there against the sunset glow  
Waving your hand, smiling your quizzical smile.  
“What next?” I hear you say. Then the sun flaunts  
Its crimson to the zenith, and goes down  
To make another day. And you are gone.

*Harriet Monroe*

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OLD FOLK-SONGS OF UKRAINA

THE KALINA

Was I not once the red cranberry  
By the river flowing?  
My father's only child was I  
In his house growing.

But they plucked the boughs of the Kalina,  
They made great bunches.  
Such is my fortune—oh, unhappy fortune!

And on a day they married me.  
As I was bidden  
I married—and, my blinded eyes,  
Forever hidden,

The world grew dark upon that morning.  
Such is my fortune—oh, unhappy fortune!

Is there no river that I may drown in?  
Was there none other  
Than he, the youth to whom they wed me,  
Father and mother?

Rivers a-plenty can be found here,  
But dry the bed now.  
And youths—brave, gallant youths—are countless;  
But they are dead now!

## *Song of Departure*

### SONG OF DEPARTURE

*A bride of Bukovina speaks:*

Dear my mother, weep not—  
I shall not take all;  
See, the cows and oxen  
Leave I in the stall.

I take just black eyebrows,  
Only eyes of blue;  
And upon your table  
Tears I leave for you;

And the little pathway  
Where my footsteps fell  
While I brought you water  
Daily from the well.

*Her mother speaks:*

Pathway, little garden—  
(Ah, she must depart!)  
While I gaze upon you  
Faints my breaking heart.

### RUTHENIAN LOVERS

"In the fields grows the rye, rye that is green, is green!  
Tell me, my lover, how livest thou, when never my face is  
seen?"

[75]

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"Out in the fields, down-beaten, rye lies upon its face—  
So do I live without thee, the good Lord giving his grace."

MY FIELD, MY FIELD

*Fragment of a very old song*

O my field, my field!  
Ploughed with bones,  
Harrowed with my breast,  
Watered with blood  
From the heart, from the bosom—  
Tell me, my field,  
When will better days be?

My field, O my field  
By my grandfather won,  
Why dost thou not give  
Me the means of life?  
Bitter toil! with my own blood stained—  
My heart's blood is there!  
How bitter for me, my field,  
To look on thee!

*Done in English by  
Florence Randal Livesay*



## FOUR JAPANESE PAINTINGS

### I THE PINE BRANCH

#### *A Painting by Kenzan*

A pine-branch stretches out  
Across the silence . . .

. . . Grey silence, untroubled  
Until this living thing  
Smote it into music. . . .

The void is restless now.  
Silence shall be no more.  
Greyness shall be no more,  
Nor any peace.  
For a singing curve and color  
Have entered the vast dwelling—  
A life, singing  
Of the suns and the snows.  
Now the old gods tremble  
In their timeless halls;  
Now the far halls beyond Orion  
Are shaken with music.  
For this chord, living,  
This soul that knows not peace—  
This dream-dust—stretches out  
Across the silence.

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## POETRY: *A Magazine of Verse*

### II PINES ON A MOUNTAIN

*A Screen by Yeitoku*

Red pine-trunks!  
Immutable pines!  
Pillars upright under the grey sky!  
Pillars upright over the chasmed earth!—  
Upon these snow-heights  
Your downward sloping branches  
Point toward the human world  
Remote and troubled.  
But here on the ultimate ramparts  
Of the winter hills,  
Your huge columns  
Rise toward bleak heaven—  
Like an indomitable procession  
Of warriors, dark, green-crested,  
To whom the snows  
Are only wine and trumpets,  
To whom the winds  
Are only battle.

## *The Wave Symphony*

### III THE WAVE SYMPHONY

#### *A Screen by Sotatsu*

Around islands of jade and malachite  
And lapis-lazuli and jasper,  
Under golden clouds,  
Struggle the grey-gold waves.

The waves are advancing,  
Swirling, eddying; the pale waves  
Are leaping into foam, and retreating—  
And straining again until they seem not waves  
But gigantic crawling hands.  
The waves clutch at the clouds,  
The near and golden clouds;  
They rise in spires over the clouds,  
And over the pine-branch set against the clouds.  
And around the islands,  
Jasper and jade,  
Their rhythms circle and sweep and re-echo  
With hollow and foam-crest,  
Infinitely interlacing their orbits and cycles  
That join and unravel, and battle and answer,  
From tumult to tumult, from music to music,  
Crest to trough, foam-height to hollow,  
Peace drowning passion, and passion  
Leaping from peace.

## POETRY: *A Magazine of Verse*

### IV BUDDHA APPEARING FROM BEHIND MOUNTAINS

#### *A Painting by Choga*

Two hills meet—  
Two dark green hills.  
About their shoulders  
Silver mists cling.

Slowly the gigantic  
Face of the Buddha  
In massive presence  
Looks over the hills.  
Tranquil his brow, unsmiling his lips;  
Filling the whole sky with his haloes of glory,  
He broods in a dream of gold.  
Measureless peace sleeps on his golden forehead;  
Measureless compassion  
Weighs on his eyes.  
Yet as I look  
It seems that his terrible hidden hands  
Even now are stirring  
To rend apart the hills—  
To divide the corrupt and cloven earth  
For the triumphal entry of his burning form.

*Arthur Davison Ficke*

## NEW VERSE

### LOVE SONG

What have I to say to you  
When we shall meet?  
Yet—  
I lie here thinking of you.

The stain of love  
Is upon the world.  
Yellow, yellow, yellow,  
It eats into the leaves,  
Smears with saffron  
The horned branches that lean  
Heavily  
Against a smooth purple sky.

There is no light—  
Only a honey-thick stain  
That drips from leaf to leaf  
And limb to limb,  
Spoiling the colors  
Of the whole world.

I am alone.  
The weight of love  
Has buoyed me up  
Till my head  
Knocks against the sky.

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See me!  
My hair is dripping with nectar—  
Starlings carry it  
On their black wings.  
See, at last  
My arms and my hands  
Are lying idle.

How can I tell  
If I shall ever love you again  
As I do now?

NAKED

What fool would feel  
His cheeks burn  
Because of the snow?  
Would he call it  
By a name, give it  
Breasts, features,  
Bare limbs?  
Would he call it  
A woman?  
(Surely then he would be  
A fool.)

And see her,  
Warmed with the cold,

Go upon the heads  
Of creatures  
Whose faces lean  
To the ground?

Would he watch  
The compassion of  
Her eyes,  
That look, now up  
Now down,  
To the turn of  
The wind and  
The turn of  
The shivering minds  
She touches—  
Motionless—troubled?

I ask you—  
I ask you, my townspeople,  
What fool is this?

Would he forget  
The sight of  
His mother and  
His wife  
Because of her?—  
Have his heart  
Turned to ice  
That will not soften?

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What!  
Would he see a thing  
Lovelier than  
A high-school girl,  
With the skill  
Of Venus  
To stand naked—  
Naked on the air?

Falling snow and  
*you up there—waiting.*

### MARRIAGE

So different, this man  
And this woman:  
A stream flowing  
In a field.

### APOLOGY

Why do I write today?  
The beauty of  
The terrible faces  
Of our nonentities  
Stirs me to it:

[84]



Colored women  
Day workers,  
Old and experienced,  
Returning home at dusk  
In cast-off clothing,  
Faces like  
Old Florentine oak.

Also  
The set pieces  
Of your faces stir me—  
Leading citizens:  
But not  
In the same way.

SUMMER SONG

Wanderer moon,  
Smiling  
A faintly ironical smile  
At this brilliant,  
Dew-moistened  
Summer morning—  
A detached,  
Sleepily indifferent  
Smile,  
A wanderer's smile—  
If I should

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Buy a shirt  
Your color, and  
Put on a necktie  
Sky-blue,  
Where would they carry me?  
Over the hills and  
Far away?  
Where would they carry me?

THE OLD WORSHIPPER

How times change, old friend,  
And how little anything changes!

We used to collect butterflies  
And insects in Kipp's woods—  
Do you remember?  
Now this wonderful collection  
From the Amazon  
Comes quite naturally  
For you to weigh and to classify.

Quiet and unnoticed  
The flower of your whole life  
Has opened its perfect petals—  
And none to witness, save one  
Old worshipper!

*William Carlos Williams*

## EDITORIAL COMMENT

### TRUTH AND THE PARADOX



HERE are times when the beauty of life seems too keen to be borne, seasons of joy or sorrow when the chaos of people and purposes assumes processional dignity, and the babel of tongues becomes a choral song. It is as if one watched this earthly episode from some far planet of larger spaces and years, and saw its criss-cross of lines, its blots and splashes of color, merge into a noble pattern set for the delight of gods. From that vantage-ground lost meanings become clear: the amazing effrontery of birth, life's heroic and unsatisfied search, the sudden silence of death, the tumultuous movement of generations around the niggardly fruitful earth—around a whirling ball suspended in space as by a single hair, held to its course by an incredibly delicate balance of warring forces—all these become an act of the eternal passion, a thought of the infinite consciousness, a daring flight of the universal spirit.

To be a part of it all—to have lived in the solar nebula and resolved into the cloud-bound earth; to have quickened into the beginnings of life, and spawned and struggled through experimental ages; to have groped outward through fish and beast and bird, beating against barriers, blindly denying denial, unconsciously seeking consciousness; to be born at last into a being erect and sentient, who gathers and records knowledge, who feels beauty even to

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the rapture of song, the ecstasy of art, who knows himself a little and gives that little away in love, who apprehends the truth a little in poignant suffering and joy; and finally to challenge the infinite with new demands, that would make of our life an antechamber and our death a gateway, that would round out the mighty circle of existence to the remotest agony of truth?—to be a part of this colossal movement is a destiny so sublime as to be beyond the reach of deliberate thought, conceivable only in rare and sudden emotions, that come unbidden in moments of intense illumination.

The mystery is not the greatness of life, but its littleness. That we, so grandly born, so mightily endowed, should grope with blind eyes and bound limbs in the dust and mire of petty desires and grievances; until we can hardly see the blue of the sky or the glory of the seasons, until we can hardly clasp our neighbor's hand or hear his voice—this is the inexplicable mystery, the blasting unreality, the bitter falsehood that underlies all the dark evils of the world.

H. M.

### POEM-GAMES

On the evenings of November twenty-sixth and twenty-ninth Mr. Vachel Lindsay and Miss Eleanor Dougherty will give together at the Chicago Little Theatre, a presentation of a few of the former's poems, the poet chanting the words while the dancer interprets them. At least this will be the formula with *The King of Yellow Butterflies*, *The Tree of*

*Laughing Bells* and *The Potatoes' Dance*. In *King Solomon and the Queen of Sheba* and *Aladdin and the Jinn* the poet promises to take "a certain co-operative part in the acting, though never bringing myself forward as anything much more than the prestidigitator who brings the dove from the hat, or the ambassador between the poem and its interpreter." In the case of these two poems the audience is expected to join in the chorus, as many audiences have done in various towns, even without Miss Dougherty to lead them.

Last summer, when I saw an early rehearsal of these "poem-games," I found the performance very beautiful and novel. This was somewhat to my surprise, because I had feared an effect of incongruity. It was a gay and delicate blending of the two arts, like dancing to music or singing with an orchestral accompaniment.

For precedents one must go back to English folk games of the seventeenth century and earlier, which have died out in England, but which still survive among Carolina and Tennessee mountaineers: this according to Mr. Cecil J. Sharp, of the English Folk Dance Society and the Stratford-on-Avon School of Folk Song and Dance, who has been lecturing in this country. Recent studies of the verse-and-action games of these mountaineers have convinced him that they preserve intact English folk-games of the period of ancestral emigration to America.

Mr. Lindsay would seem to be working toward a new development of this art of long ago, which he enriches by using the dance in addition to gesture, marching and pos-

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turing. Indeed, he says: "It is my hope that this work brings my verses a little nearer to the old precedents of folk-dancing and folk-lore." And it all follows the suggestion made to the Illinois poet by Mr. Yeats over two years ago—to "restore the primitive singing of poetry." *H. M.*

### REVIEWS

MR. HAGEDORN'S CLYTEMNESTRA

*The Great Maze and The Heart of Youth—a Poem and a Play*, by Hermann Hagedorn. Macmillan Co.

The long poem, in five parts, which opens this volume retells in full-swinging blank verse the old story of Agamemnon's return and death.

The poet's motive in using this ancient tale seems to be a new interpretation of the character of Clytemnestra. The queen kills her husband, not because she wants to but because she doesn't want to, not because she hates him and loves Aegisthus, but because she loves him and despises Aegisthus, with whom she had dallied for years merely to pass the time and dull her longing for her royal lord. She lays down the law thus to Aegisthus:

Not fear or love or you or Agamemnon  
Shall have the power to crush me or deride,  
Condemn me or forgive. I will not bow;  
I will not be raised up; I will not drink  
Mercy from any lips. My days are mine,  
And I will keep the government of them. . . .  
I am the Queen. I am not moved. I move.

*Mr. Hagedorn's Clytemnestra*

Unwilling to accept forgiveness and reinstatement from the man whom she loves and who loves her, she uses her baser lover to kill him.

Now this may or may not be a plausible modern reading of Clytemnestra's motive. It seems to me a bit strained, a motive which might lead to suicide but hardly to murder; and in its high-sounding presentation the old sculpturesque royalty of the queen seems to disappear. I wonder, in following it, whether, in spite of the Great War, we of this twentieth century have lost our approach to, our belief in, stark and simple tragic passion like that which the elder poets, and the world in general, long granted to Clytemnestra, Orestes, Judith, Lady Macbeth, and other famous murderers of history or legend. But my chief objection to Mr. Hagedorn's idea of Clytemnestra is not any questioning of his competence, or of the truth or falsehood, the strength or weakness, of modern studies of human motives; but a deep-rooted objection to the misuse, by any modern mind, of a great typical figure to express an idea contrary to that which it has always embodied, and to which it is, in a sense, sacred.

I own to extreme impatience when a modern poet would persuade us, for example, that Judith fell in love with Holofernes, or Jael with Sisera, before she slew him. Are there not enough amorous women in ancient and modern times whom our poets may study to their hearts' content? Why should they lay violent hands on these two warrior women, long sacred in the imagination of many nations as

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expressing, to the extreme degree, the tribal impulse of patriotism? The warrior woman is an authentic type; examples of her may be found today much nearer home than Serbia, where she has been quite recently conspicuous in battle beside her brothers. Can our poets no longer recognize and appreciate this type, that they should violate the old biblical tradition and try to add two great Amazons to the long list of amorous heroines?

In the same way Mr. Hagedorn lays violent and sacrilegious hands on Clytemnestra. To the Greek poets, who created her out of more or less historic legend, she was a starkly simple example of the amorous woman who stops at nothing, even the murder of a king, to rid herself and her lover of an avenging intruder. These poets enshrined her figure indestructibly in that form; and any modern effort, even the ablest, to reshape her is as futile as would be the chisel of Rodin on the great portal of the cathedral of Chartres. Rodin, however, would know enough, and feel enough, not to attempt it.

There are modern women who might set forth effectively Mr. Hagedorn's idea, which is a good enough idea in its way. Only none of these has yet acquired a glamour which makes the world instinctively take the poet's word for her beauty and royalty, instinctively believe him when he tells us of "her enigmatic eyes," "the vast black night of her eyes," or of her

April moods

Of swan-like queenliness afloat on dreams.

The poet who chooses a figure long enshrined gives himself



. *Mr. Hagedorn's Clytemnestra*

the advantage of the tradition even while he violates the tradition, and saves himself the trouble of complete creation.

Mr. Hagedorn's diction is fairly modern, in spite of two or three "deems"—modern enough to admit the word "daddy" on little Electra's lips. But the dialogue, of which most of the poem is composed, is undramatic; it misses the quality of speech.

*The Heart of Youth* is a picturesque mediaeval play with which the boys of the Hill School dedicated their out-door theatre last year. It is unpretentious, simple and sweet, and should be effective when played by boys or girls, or both. It ends with a fine moment, when the crowd, seeking and singing, "surge forth with torches into the night."

H. M.

A DECADE OF GIBSON

*Battle and Other Poems*, by Wilfrid Wilson Gibson. Macmillan Co.

This book enables one to compare Mr. Gibson's present with his past, for the war poems are new while the six brief plays, which fill more than half the volume, were first printed in 1906.

Even at that time the poet had chosen his theme—the life of the poor in rural England, and had stript his blank verse down to the barest simplicity. Though the little plays—or, rather, dramatic episodes—are perhaps over-deliberate and their technique is yet not quite free, one feels in them

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spiritual intuition and a depth of yearning sympathy with the harsh struggles, and keen joys and sorrows, of simple folk who live close to the niggardly fruitful earth and to animals. Ruth, coming home through the bitter snow to bear the child of a vagabond lover, bends lovingly over a weak little new-born lamb:

Ah, what a night to come into the world!  
Poor motherless thing! and those poor patient mothers!  
I might have known it was the lambing storm.

And Esther Shield, just wedded, undaunted by her mother-in-law's story of her own tragic marriage and prophecy of woe, turns in triumph to her ardent young mate, saying:

I shall bide.  
I have heard all, and yet I would not go,  
Nor would I have a single word unsaid.  
I loved you, husband; yet I did not know you  
Until your mother spoke. I know you now,  
And I am not afraid.

But still more interesting are the *Battle* lyrics—surer in technique, more mature in the handling of character. In fact, with the single exception of the Brooke sonnets, they are the truest and most poignant war poems we have had thus far from any English poet; expressing “the vast unreason of war” through the stark irony and savage simplicity of the common soldier's or refugee's reaction. Readers of POETRY will remember many of these withering songs, which, like a flame, light up the sudden and perishing emotion. Here is one they missed, called *Salvage*:

So suddenly her life  
Had crashed about that gray old country wife,

## *A Decade of Gibson*

Naked she stood, and gazed  
Bewildered, while her home about her blazed.  
New-widowed, and bereft  
Of her five sons, she clung to what was left,  
Still hugging all she'd got—  
A toy gun and a copper coffee-pot.

The effect of this group of poems, like that of the finest American poem of this war, Miss Driscoll's *Metal Checks*, is to put out of date forever the romance, the glory, of battle—that ancient glamour which has been celebrated in song since Homer, and which Rupert Brooke, like a modern troubadour, set to the music of an ancient harp as he marched to his death. The poet who truly represents this age sings another tune. He expresses that bitter brooding in the depths of every heroic modern heart, the feeling that “in war,” as the London *Times* reviewer says, “there are no longer men, there is no longer man; there are only sports of chance, pullers of triggers, bewildered fulfillers of instructions, cynical acceptors of destiny.”

The book includes also, in the section *Friends*, the group of fine sonnets which we recently printed, and a few memorial and personal poems. Among the latter is this one, called *Marriage*:

Going my way of old,  
Contented more or less,  
I dreamt not life could hold  
Such happiness.

I dreamt not that love's way  
Could keep the golden height  
Day after happy day,  
Night after night.

H. M. .

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### TANGLED TREES

*Trees*, by Harold Monro. Poetry Bookshop, London.

Trees—the title makes me think of John Muir of happy memory, and his wonderful love of trees. It passed the love of brothers, it was a proud rapture of understanding, a mystic spiritual communion, like the intimacy of a mediaeval saint with archangels. Trees were his archangels, ranged in shining ranks about the throne of God; and mercifully gathering at their feet the races of men, and interceding for them with the Most High. From the little quivering aspen, tender as a fawn, to the *sequoia gigantea*, noble as a mountain, he knew them to their deepest secrets, and loved them in his deepest heart.

Well, Mr. Monro loves trees too, in his odd and ingenious way. He says:

Tree-life is like a corridor between  
The Seen and the Unseen.

Indeed, he almost “makes of their love an immorality.”

Grip hard, become a root; so drive  
Your muscles through the ground alive  
That you'll be breaking from above your knees  
Out into branches:

Thus he forces himself into tree-life. Then—

The trees throw up their singing leaves, and climb  
Spray over spray. They break through Time.  
Their roots lash through the clay. They lave  
The earth, and wash along the ground.  
They burst in green wave over wave,  
Fly in a blossom of light foam:  
Rank following windy rank they come.  
They flood the plain,  
Swirl through the valley, top the mound,

## *Tangled Trees*

Flow over the low hill,  
Curl round  
The bases of the mountain, fill  
Their crevices, and stain  
Their ridges green.

But the poet kept "too much mortality":

They drove me forth. The angry trees  
Roared till I tumbled lean and lewd  
Out of that Paradise. The forest rose  
To scourge my wavering conscience, and pursued.

But, though driven forth, he—we—cannot escape them:

How beautifully they grow,  
Crowding the brink of silence everywhere!

Yet they leave their proper place—

They follow us and haunt us. We must build  
Houses of wood—

and fill them with "fragments of the forest"—chairs, tables,  
doors, etc. Others we put to sleep under railroad tracks.

And some, some trees, before they die,  
Carved and moulded small  
Suddenly begin—  
Oh, what a wild and windy woodland call  
Out of the lips of the violin!

Such is the argument of this curiously subtle poem. Original it is, beyond question, and sometimes beautiful; but Mr. Monro's forest would be too uncanny, too sophisticated, for John Muir.

By way of moral we have a cryptic couplet at the end:

And you, be certain that you keep  
Some memory of trees for sleep.

The book is a beautiful limited edition, all done by hand at the Temple Sheen Press. It has decorative wood-cuts—

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at least they look like old wood-cuts—by James Guthrie, the designs a clever cross between Blake and Morris. Why do they do these things so much better in England?

H. M.

### STEPHENS' ROAD TO DUBLIN

*The Rocky Road to Dublin*, by James Stephens. Macmillan Co.

To sit down to review James Stephens is much like being asked to furnish a recipe for making star-dust, or to analyze the shivering beauty of the dawn. His work has the peculiarly Celtic quality of existing in space, completely divorced from the world as we know it. His beauty comes to us faintly, filtered through the simple words of every-day speech, which yet, as he writes them, are no longer the words we know, but subtle, delicate, shimmering things, full of gray undertones, swift flashes of silver humor and wisdom from some other world. To the many who love his work it is something beyond reason and analysis, something to be accepted joyfully, as wild flowers and meadow larks are accepted, and loved as instinctively.

This for instance, called *The Secret*:

I was frightened, for a wind  
Crept along the grass to say  
Something that was in my mind  
Yesterday—

Something that I did not know  
Could be found out by the wind,  
I had buried it so low  
In my mind.

## Stephens' Road to Dublin

Or this delectable bit, *The Fur Coat*:

I walked out in my Coat of Pride,  
I looked about on every side,  
And said the mountains should not be  
Just where they were, and that the sea  
Was badly placed, and that the beech  
Should be an oak—and then from each  
I turned in dignity as if  
They were not there: I sniffed a sniff  
And climbed upon my sunny shelf,  
And sneezed a while, and scratched myself.

*The Rocky Road to Dublin*, however, in spite of its beauty, goes to prove definitely what *Songs from the Clay* had suggested, that Mr. Stephens is more of a poet in his prose than in his verse. In the forever inimitable *Crock of Gold*, one of the most fascinating books in English, and in *The Demigods*, although writing in prose, he is the ideal poet, tender, mystical, witty—and quite himself. In his poetry he has not yet quite found that self. He remains a little uncertain. And why, oh why, has he altered the haunting little poem *Hawks*, published long ago in *POETRY*, to the present insufficient version?

Yet, as there can be only one Synge, so there can only be one James Stephens. Let us sing a little chant to the leprecauns in his honor!

E. T.

### OTHER BOOKS OF VERSE

*Turns and Movies and Other Tales in Verse*, by Conrad Aiken. The New Poetry Series. Houghton Mifflin Co.  
If Masfield and W. W. Gibson, Frost and Masters—the whole company of story-tellers in verse today—had never

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written, there is small doubt that *Turns and Movies* would prove Conrad Aiken an authentic poet. But as it is, their unquiet ghosts stalk behind his work, Gibson most prominent in this volume, Masfield in *Earth Triumphant*.

This is the more unfortunate because Mr. Aiken has invention, vividness, compression and at times a pleasing lyric quality. His situations are real situations, swiftly told, his technique easy and effective. It is hard to say just where the authenticity seeps out, yet the total effect is that of a clever craftsman, working well in the medium of his day, yet never quite reaching to the heights.

The poems in this book are unusually even in quality, and it is difficult to choose between them. Perhaps *Discordants*, *Boardman and Coffin* and one numbered simply *XIII* are the most successful. They are too long to quote, but the following, *Duval's Birds*, is typical of the volume:

The parrot, screeching, flew out into the darkness,  
Circled three times above the upturned faces  
With a great whirl of brilliant outspread wings,  
And then returned to stagger on her finger.  
She bowed and smiled, eliciting applause . . .  
The property man hated her dirty birds.  
But it had taken years—yes, years—to train them  
To shoulder flags, strike bells by twéaking strings,  
Or climb sedately little flights of stairs.  
When they were stubborn, she tapped them with a wand,  
And her eyes glittered a little under the eyebrows.  
The red one flapped and flapped on a swinging wire;  
The little white ones winked round yellow eyes.

E. T.



### *Other Books of Verse*

*Songs of Armageddon and Other Poems*, by George Sylvester Viereck. Mitchell Kennerley.

This volume is typical of the later Viereck, full of wind and words, and the lure of scented flesh. That the war poems should be propaganda, not poetry, is pardonable. Better poets than he have lost their vision of art in the hot breath of war. But that he who had in his youth one of the purest lyric gifts of our day, should come before he is forty to the feeble puerilities of the love poems in this volume, is indeed pitiful. In the grave of the flesh Mr. Viereck has buried his talent. For the rest a merciful silence is best. *E. T.*

### CLASSICS IN ENGLISH

*The Poets' Translation Series I-VI.* The Egoist, London.

The translators of this series have an opportunity which most of them have neglected. H. D. is the exception.

Gilbert Murray has struck at Greek scholarship and done no good to English verse. Euripides for the working-man, at a shilling the play, in the style of fifty years ago—an ideal of socialism and popular education—Greek without tears. The only result can be still greater neglect of Greek in our schools. Why study Greek when an *adequate* translation can always be had, cheap and easy scholarship for the busy man? There are translations for the scholar—the splendid Oxford Aristotle—but these do not pretend to be literature. And what is scholarship is an introduction and commentary for the original, what is literature is enrichment of

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English by contact with Greek, a criticism of one language by another, a fertilisation. But there is no substitute, no *adequate* translation.

Some of these translators have fallen into the abyss of Murray. Mr. Aldington's *Anyte* is good, but hardly ever steps aside from the path of Mackail. There is no use in merely multiplying translations of Greek epigrams which after all belong rather to the art of epigraphy than to literature. The Greeks, like the Italians, put intelligence upon monuments. If our tombstone artists could study Greek—but this is a divagation.

H. D. is a poet. She has at least avoided the traditional jargon prescribed for translators: she has turned Euripides into English verse which can be taken seriously, verse of our own time, as modern as was Swinburne's when it appeared. Her verse is a perversion of the opposite extreme. Swinburne is too fluid, H. D. too abrupt. The participle becomes an indicative; most of the "I saw" and "I heard" drop out; the chorus becomes an independent poem. Her type of verse makes her task the more difficult. It relies upon a succession of images; and the images of the Greek tragedian were made up of stock phrases rearranged. Thus she is compelled sometimes to lose contact with the original in avoiding clichés:

A flash—

Achilles passed along the beach . . .

Achilles had strapped the wind

About his ankles . . .

Euripides says only that the women saw Achilles swift-running, swift as the wind. It would be impossible to find

equivalents for *swift as the wind* and *swift-running* and escape redundancy. This sort of improvement is permissible, but only marks time: it does not *enrich* English from Greek. And in a few cases, where Euripides' style is merely bald, the alteration is not an improvement. "I keep the memory of the assembled army" becomes "My mind is graven with ships" with obvious loss of dignity. And in the translation—

There is no power but in base men  
Nor any man whom the gods do not hate—

the meaning is completely perverted; Euripides has made the characteristic remark, that men should not strive to be illustrious (in "virtue" in the Greek sense) lest they bring down on themselves the *invidia* of the gods. Again,

Each man is marked for his toil,  
Much labor is his fate,  
Nor is there any new hurt  
That may be added to the race:

is not only a similar mistranslation, but fails to rise quite to what is the emotional crisis of the play.

Still, it is a great deal to have translations that one can read, translations into the language of contemporary verse, even if H. D.'s monotonously short lines with excess of stops and defect of connectives are sometimes tiring to eye and ear. And often she does succeed in bringing something out of the Greek language to the English, in an immediate contact which gives life to both, the contact which makes it possible for the modern language perpetually to draw sustenance from the dead:

May no child of mine,  
Nor any child of my child,

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Ever fashion such a tale  
As the Phrygians shall murmur  
As they stoop at their distaffs  
Whispering with Lydians  
Splendid with weight of gold . . .

The translations of Sappho and Leonidas do not deserve mention. Some of the Latin poetry of the Renaissance which Mr. Aldington gives us is translated for the first time, and some may be found in Mr. Pound's *Spirit of Romance*. Mr. Flint has done a service in translating the *Mosella*, but is not a "boat propelled with oars" the same thing as a row-boat?  
T. S. Eliot

*The Divine Comedy*, translated by Henry Johnson. Yale University Press.

It is assuredly an honorable ambition that prompts one to the difficult and ungrateful task of translating metrically the entire *Divine Comedy*, line for line; and it is an honorable procedure to "rely solely," as Professor Johnson has done, "on one's control of the English medium, unaided." He has indeed been as "faithful" as he claims. More: he has shown himself sturdy, dogged, ploddingly, professorially persistent. He has made a real campaign, like the British in Picardy—a trench a day, a town a week; and on page 436 he reaches duly the church triumphant and the *luce eterna*.

But a line-for-line translation of Dante must always tip toward prose. The verbal glamour is necessarily lost; the finely-woven chain of the *terza rima*—a web of steel and of flowers—is sacrificed no less. We are likely to have, when all's done, not the carved marbles of a Florentine duomo,

but only a plain, neat, four-square edifice in colonial brick; not samite or cloth-of-gold, but simple serge or cheviot; not beccaficos or peacocks' tongues, but just everyday roast beef and boiled potatoes. It cannot be said that the present translation seems less conscientiously humdrum than one in prose (such as Norton's), or one on the same line-for-line plan (such as Longfellow's), or one in short paragraphs of literal prose, corresponding to each *terzina* (such as the co-operative version issued by Dent). Indeed, it would not be difficult to go farther and indicate passages where Professor Johnson has renounced advantages of epithet and rhythm rightly his. Briefly, here as elsewhere, the *Unbeschreibliche* does not get itself *gethan*.

The present volume is absolutely without notes, except for a few pages devoted, curiously, to the translation of Latin phrases. However, in conjunction with another book of the right sort, it might serve a useful lexicographical purpose. Alongside of some good Italian text that has a liberal provision of notes both grammatical and historical—old Bianchi's, let us say—it would become a real help, as a pony or even as a dictionary, for the American student who has taken up Dante a little before being prepared for him.

A handsome volume, inside and out.

H. B. F.

## ANNOUNCEMENT OF AWARDS

Each year our November number bears a special and difficult responsibility—the awarding of prizes. This year the editors and advisory committee of POETRY are enabled, through the generosity of three lovers of the art, all of Chicago, to award three prizes for poems printed in the magazine during its fourth year—October, 1915, to September, 1916. The first prize is restricted to a citizen of the United States; the other two, of which one is for a lyric, make no distinction of nationality.

From this competition poems by members of the editorial staff are withdrawn, the members represented this year being Alice Corbin Henderson, Henry B. Fuller and Ezra Pound. Poems by Mr. Yeats are not eligible, because of his very gracious declination of our Guarantors' Prize the first year. Messrs. Sandburg and Lindsay, who received the Levinson Prize in 1914 and 1915, are not eligible again for that award. And translations are not considered.

The HELEN HAIRE LEVINSON PRIZE of two hundred dollars, offered by Mr. Salmon O. Levinson, of Chicago, for a poem, or group of poems, by a citizen of the United States, is awarded to

MR. EDGAR LEE MASTERS

of Chicago, for his poem, *All Life in a Life*, published in the March number. One member of the jury, while concurring in the award to Mr. Masters, votes for the poem *Arabel*, in the November number.

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### *Announcement of Awards*

The prize of one hundred dollars, offered by a guarantor for a poem or group of poems, is awarded to

MR. JOHN GOULD FLETCHER

for his *Arizona Poems*, published in the March number. Mr. Fletcher is a cosmopolite whose residence is difficult to state. As a child he lived in Little Rock, Arkansas; he studied at Harvard, but left before graduation to travel abroad; and since the war began he has lived chiefly in Boston. At present he is sojourning in London, where he recently married a young English lady.

The last of our three prizes has given the jury the most trouble of all, their first votes scattering through five or six of the year's twelve numbers. In this emergency the members fell back upon the simplest definition of a lyric, and remembered the prize-donor's stipulation that, in case of doubt, the prize should be awarded to a poet comparatively young and unknown. Therefore:

The prize of one hundred dollars, offered by Mrs. Julius Rosenwald, of Chicago, for a lyric poem, is awarded to

MISS MUNA LEE

of Oklahoma City, Oklahoma, for one or more poems of the group, *Foot-notes*, published in the January number. The jury is divided as to the particular poem to be honored, numbers III, IV and VII being favored.

Miss Lee was graduated in 1913 from the University of Mississippi, and, on removing to the newer state, she took

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a post-graduate course at the University of Oklahoma. She made her first public appearance as a poet with *Foot-notes*.

Certain poems published this year by previous prize-winners deserve special mention, in the opinion of the jury: the *Poems* of W. B. Yeats (February); *The Great Hunt* and *Our Prayer of Thanks*, by Carl Sandburg (October); *King Solomon and the Queen of Sheba*, by Vachel Lindsay (June); *Summer Dawn*, by Constance Lindsay Skinner (January); and *Three Travellers Watch a Sunrise*, by Wallace Stevens (July).

Besides these, the following poems receive honorable mention:

*Baldur*, by Allen Upward (May).

*1777*, by Amy Lowell (August).

*Epigrams*, by Rabindranath Tagore (September).

*Sunrise on Rydal Water*, by John Drinkwater (December).

*A Breton Night*, by Ernest Rhys (April).

*Refugees*, by Grace Hazard Conkling (November).

*Love-lyric*, by Max Michelson (May).

*Conversation Galante*, by T. S. Eliot (September).

*Images*, by Richard Aldington (October).

*Strange Meetings*, by Harold Monro (September).

*Charcoals*, by Maxwell Bodenheim (November).

*Sacrifice*, by Frederic Manning (July).

*Sonnets*, by Wilfrid Wilson Gibson (March).

*Songs*, by Sara Teasdale (October).

*Cross Patch*, by Horace Holley (April).

*Eastland Waters*, by Agnes Lee (February).



### *Announcement of Awards*

*In Summer*, by Clara Shanafelt (June).

*On Waking*, by Joseph Campbell (March).

*The Lace-maker of Ypres*, by G. Tucker Bispham (February).

*Make No Vows*, by Grace Fallow Norton (December).

## CORRESPONDENCE

### THE RETORT COURTEOUS

*An imaginary conversation between two lady poets on the plains of Arizona, after perusing each other's manuscripts.*

Said Mina Loy to Muna Lee,

"I wish your style appealed to me."

"Yours gives me anything but jöy!"

Said Muna Lee to Mina Loy.

L. U.

## NOTES

Mr. Robert Frost, of Franconia, N. H., is well known as the author of *A Boy's Will* and *North of Boston*. His publishers, Henry Holt & Co., will issue his new book of poems before Christmas.

Mr. Arthur Davison Ficke, of Davenport, Iowa, is also well known, his more recent books of verse being *Twelve Japanese Painters* (R. F. Seymour Co.), *Sonnets of a Portrait Painter* and *The Man on the Hill-top* (Kennerley). January is the date set for Mr. Ficke's new book, *An April Elegy and Other Poems*.

Florence Randal Livesay (Mrs. Fred L.) of Winnipeg, Manitoba, is also familiar to readers of *POETRY*. A book of her Ruthenian translations—or adaptations—will soon appear.

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Dr. William Carlos Williams, a young physician of Rutherford, N. J., has been published in *POETRY* since its first year. He is represented in the first imagist anthology, *Des Imagistes*.

### BOOKS RECEIVED

#### ORIGINAL VERSE:

- Mothers and Men*, by Harold Trowbridge Pulsifer. Houghton Mifflin Co.  
*Greek Wayfarers and Other Poems*, by Edwina Stanton Babcock. G. P. Putman's Sons.  
*The Book of Winifred Maynard*. G. P. Putman's Sons.  
*La Première Aventure Céleste de M. Antipyrine*, par Tristan Tzara.  
*The Son of Merope and Other Poems*, by Antoinette de Coursey Patterson. H. W. Fisher & Co., Philadelphia.  
*Polyclitus and Other Poems*, by Rowland Thirlmere. Elkin Mathews, London.  
*Twelve Occupations*, by Jean De Bosschère. Elkin Mathews.  
*Riders of the Stars*, by Henry Herbert Knibbs. Houghton Mifflin Co.  
*After Hours*, by Wm. Frederick Feld. Loyola Univ. Press, Chicago.  
*The Two Worlds*, by Sherard Vines. B. H. Blackwell, Oxford.  
*The Iron Age*, by Frank Betts. B. H. Blackwell.  
*The Burning Wheel*, by Aldous Huxley. B. H. Blackwell.  
*The Glory of Toil*, by Edna Dean Proctor. Houghton Mifflin Co.

#### PLAYS:

- The Pine-Tree—with an Introductory Causerie on the Japanese Theatre*, by M. C. Marcus. Duffield & Co.  
*The New Morn—English Diplomacy and the Triple Entente: a Phantasmagoria in One Act*, by Barrie Americanus Neutralis. Open Court Pub. Co., Chicago.  
*The Tidings Brought to Mary*, by Paul Claudel: translated from the French by Louise Morgan Sill. Yale Univ. Press.  
*King Saint Olaf*, by Gustav Melby. Richard G. Badger.

#### PROSE:

- Modulations and A Spray of Olive*, by Stanhope Bayley. Elkin Mathews.

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SLEEP



HERE do I go  
Down roads of sleep,  
Behind the blue-brimmed day?  
No more I know her silvered sweep  
Nor colors clear nor gray,

Nor women's ways  
Nor those of men,  
Nor blame, nor praise.  
Where am I, then?

Oh, fragrantly  
The airs of earth arise  
In waking hours of light,  
While vagrantly  
Sea symphonies  
Of changing sound surprise;

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Till for a space one goes  
Beyond the salt and snows  
And searching tides along the wide-stretched beach,  
Beyond the last, faint reach  
Of odor, sight and sound, far forth—far forth—  
Where neither South nor North  
Points down the roads unguessed,  
Where East is not, nor West:  
At night down roads of sleep,  
Of dreamless sleep,  
Past all the compassed ways the reason tells,  
To unknown citadels.

Just as one turns, and while day's dusk-breathed blue  
And music, many-dappled, merge in flight,  
Half in a dream, one finds a tale is true  
That down one's memory sings, still and light.  
Just as the spirit turns,  
Half-dreaming one discerns  
Deeply the tale is true  
That long ago one knew:  
Of how a mermaid loved a mortal knight;  
And how, unless she died, she still must change,  
And leave his human ways, and go alone  
At intervals, where seas unfathomed range  
Through coral groves around the ocean's throne,  
Where cool-armed mermaids dive through crystal hours,  
And braid their streaming hair with pearls, and sing

## *Sleep*

Among the green and clear-lit water flowers,  
The sea-changed splendors of their ocean king.

Like hers our ways on earth,  
Who, from our day of birth,  
Would die, unless we slept—  
Must die, unless for hours,  
Beyond our senses' powers,  
Down soundless space we leapt.

Beyond the deepest roll  
Of pain's and rapture's sweep,  
Where goes the human soul  
That vanishes in sleep?

Down dreamless paths unguessed, beyond the senses' powers,  
Beyond the breath of fragrance, sound and light—  
As once through crystal unremembered hours  
The mermaid dived who loved a mortal knight:  
Far forth—far forth—  
Beyond the South or North,  
Past all the compassed ways the day has shown,  
To live divine and deep at night down roads of sleep,  
In citadels unknown.

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CITY WHISTLES

To H. M.

Now the morning winds are rising. Now the morning  
whistles cry.

Fast their crescent voices dim the paling star.

Through the misted city mainland, wide their questing sum-  
mons fly

Many-toned—"O mortal, tell me who you are!"

Down the midland, down the morning, fresh their sweep-  
ing voices buoy:

"Siren ship! Silver ship! Sister ship! Ahoy! Sister ship,  
ahoy! Ship ahoy!"

"What's the stuff of life you're made from? What the cargo  
you must trade from?"

From afar their onward voices break the blue,

Crying, "Bring your gold or barley! Come to barter! Come  
to parley!

Ring the bell, and swing the bridge, and let me through."

Like some freighted ship that goes, where the city river flows,

Like a trading ship that questions, "Who are you?"

In among the river craft, as she rides by stack and shaft

Through Chicago from Sheboygan and the Soo.

"What's the stuff of life you're made from? What the  
cargo you convoy?

Ring the bell! Swing the bridge! Sister ship, ahoy!"

*City Whistles*

At last  
The twilight rises fast.  
"Hard was the day!"  
The questing whistles say.  
Over wall and plinth, ascendant, smoke-wreaths, hyacinth,  
    resplendent,  
Curl and flow;  
And many-voiced the evening whistles bay,  
"Hard was our day."  
The scaling whistles say,  
"Our jarred and jangled day."  
Then all their clamors blow,  
"Great was our day!"  
And sing a tale of fate untold and fugitive,  
Something spacious, something 'mordant, something gracious  
    and discordant,  
Mean and splendid, something all our lives here live.  
Down the midland mists at twilight, have you heard their  
    singing sweep,  
Where their far-toned voices, many-chorded, buoy—  
And our mortal ways in wonder hail creation's unknown  
    deep—  
"Siren ship! Silver ship! Sister ship, ahoy!"

*Edith Wyatt*

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MARTIN OF TOURS

"As I today was wayfaring"—

*Holy, Holy, Holy!—low—*

Said Christ in heaven's evening—

*The Holies yet more hushed and slow—*

"I met a knight upon the road;

A plumed charger he bestrode.

"He saw the beggar that was I—

*Holy, Holy, Holy!—long—*

Head and foot one beggary—

*Holy, Holy, Holy!—song—*

One that shivered in the cold

While his horse trailed cloth of gold.

"Down he leaped, his sword outdrawn—

*Holy, Holy, Holy!—swells—*

Cleaved his cloak, laid half upon—

*Holy! now a peal of bells—*

Shoulders that the cross had spanned;

And I think he kissed my hand.

"Then he passed the road along,

*Holy, Holy, Holy!—laud—*

Caroling a knightly song—

*Holy! in the face of God.*

Yea, Father, by Thy sovereign name,

Begging is a goodly game."

*Charles L. O'Donnell*



## PROFILES FROM CHINA

### THE STORY TELLER

In a corner of the market place he sits, his face the target  
for many eyes.

The sombre crowd about him is motionless, inert. Behind  
their faces no lamp burns; only their eyes glow faintly  
with a reflected light.

For their eyes are on his face.

It alone is alive, is vibrant, moving bronze under a sun of  
bronze.

The taut skin, like polished metal, shines along his cheek  
and jaw. His eyes cut upward from a slender nose, and  
his quick mouth moves sharply out and in.

Artful are the gestures of his mouth, elaborate and full of  
guile. When he draws back the bow of his lips his face  
is like a mask of lacquer, set with teeth of pearl, fan-  
tastic, terrible. . . .

What strange tale lives in the gestures of his mouth?

Does a fox-maiden, bewitching, tiny-footed, lure a scholar  
to his doom? Is an unfilial son tortured of devils? Or  
does a decadent queen sport with her eunuchs?

I cannot tell.

The faces of the people are wooden; only their eyes burn  
dully with a reflected light.

I shall never know.

I am alien, alien. . . .

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### OUR CHINESE ACQUAINTANCE

We met him in the runway called a street, between the warrens known as houses.

He looked still the same, but his French-cut tweeds, his continental hat and small round glasses were alien here. About him we felt a troubled uncertainty.

He greeted us gladly. "It is good," he said in his soft French, "to see my foreign friends again. . . .

You find our city dirty, I am sure—on every stone dirt grows in China.

How the people crowd! The street is choked. *Nong koi chi!* Go away, curious ones! The ladies cannot breathe. . . .

No, my people are not clean. They do not understand, I think.

In Belgium, where I studied—

You did not know? Yes, I was studying in Bruges, studying Christianity, when the great war came.

We, you know, love peace. I could not see. . . . .

"So I came home.

"But China is very dirty. . . . our priests are rascals, and the people . . . . . I do not know.

Is there, perhaps, a true religion somewhere?"

Behind his glasses his slant eyes were troubled.

"I do not know," he said.

We met him in the runway called a street, between the warrens known as houses.

A SCHOLAR

You sit, chanting the maxims of Confucius.  
On your head is a domed cap of black satin, and your supple  
hands with their long nails are piously folded.  
You rock to and fro rhythmically.  
Your voice, rising and falling in clear nasal monosyllables,  
flows on steadily, monotonously, like the flowing of water  
and the flowering of thought.  
You are chanting, it seems, of the pious conduct of man in  
all ages;  
And I know you for a scoundrel.  
None the less the maxims of Confucius are venerable, and  
your voice pleasant.  
I listen attentively.

CHINESE NEW YEAR

Mrs. Sung has a new kitchen-god.  
The old one—he who has presided over the household this  
twelvemonth—has returned to the Celestial Regions to  
make his report.  
Before she burned him Mrs. Sung smeared his mouth with  
sugar; so that doubtless the report will be favorable.  
Now she has a new god.  
As she paid ten coppers for him, he is handsomely painted  
and should be highly efficacious.  
So there is rejoicing in the house of Mrs. Sung.

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THE MOST-SACRED MOUNTAIN

Space, and the twelve clean winds of heaven,  
And this sharp exultation, like a cry, after the slow six thousand steps of climbing!

This is Tai Shan, the beautiful, the most holy.

Below my feet the foot-hills nestle, brown with flecks of green; and lower down the flat brown plain, the floor of earth, stretches away to blue infinity.

Beside me in this airy space the temple roofs cut their slow curves against the sky,

And one black bird circles above the void.

Space, and the twelve clean winds are here;

And with them broods eternity—a swift, white peace, a presence manifest.

The rhythm ceases here. Time has no place. This is the end that has no end.

Here, when Confucius came, a half a thousand years before the Nazarene, he stepped, with me, thus into timelessness.

The stone beside us waxes old, the carven stone that says:  
“On this spot once Confucius stood and felt the smallness of the world below.”

The stone grows old:

Eternity is not for stones.

*The Most-Sacred Mountain*

But I shall go down from this airy space, this swift white  
peace, this stinging exultation.

And time will close about me, and my soul stir to the rhythm  
of the daily round.

Yet, having known, life will not press so close, and always I  
shall feel time ravel thin about me;

For once I stood

In the white windy presence of eternity.

*Eunice Tietjens*

ENOUGH

I was born to those who longed for me

Ere ever my life began;

I have glimpsed the soul of a woman,

And fought the fight of a man;

I have reared a child, and thought of God:

Now, Death, do what you can!

*Winifred Webb*

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ON THE LAND

THE BLACK LAND

I will plough the land,  
Turning up the black soil.  
I will ride upon this heaving surface  
As a boat rides upon the water.  
Even as a boat  
Cleaving the water with an eager keel,  
I have run a furrow  
Straight across the ridges.

I will sow down this field,  
Scattering gems.  
With both hands will I scatter  
Quivering emeralds out of a bottomless pouch.

As I tread the loam  
My feet sink deep.  
The black earth embraces my ankles  
And clings to my bent knees.

I sing as I go  
Scattering emeralds.  
The wind sings upon my lips,  
And pearls stream off my neck and forehead.  
I am bathed in a sweat of pearls.

Eyes straight forward  
Rest on a brightening ultimate slope.

SUCCESSION

It is not as if I stood alone.  
When I stop to rest the horses  
And take a look at the sky,  
It is not me  
So much as my father  
Stopping in the same furrow :  
For I have his shoulders  
And his eyes.

And when I stumped that field,  
I felt as if I were his father,  
Who cleared the first land  
And built the house.  
My father built on the ell,  
But he slept himself  
In his father's bed  
In the old house ;  
And that's where I sleep.

I hope my son will stick to the land.  
I like to watch him plough  
Upon that hillside,  
And burn brush  
Along the road.  
It is as much me  
As it is himself,  
And as much my father  
As either of us.

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THE RED LAND

In the autumn,  
Bathed in gold-dust,  
I shall strip the red land  
Of a golden harvest.

Oh, fruitful as the red land  
Bearing golden harvest  
In the autumn,  
Bountiful as the prairie  
Heaving milky breasts  
On flushed horizons!

My hand slackens  
In the act of cutting,  
While I lose myself  
In these blue distances.

The scythe pauses  
On the neck of the wheat  
As my heart faints against  
These flushed horizons.

I that have seen the sky,  
In the time of reaping,  
Between her breasts  
In the wheat-field,  
Sowing and reaping,  
There I worship  
The land!

*Joseph Warren Beach*



## NOVEMBER ON THE LAKE MICHIGAN DUNES

The dunes are graves that shift and dance,  
Showing a skeleton  
When by the pushing wind's advance  
Their coffin is undone,  
And in the ribbed and bitter sand  
A murdered tree puts out  
A white limb like a ghastly hand,  
A dead trunk like a snout.

The dunes are ghosts that line the beach,  
Hidden and veiled and wild,  
Now holding silence, each with each,  
Now lisping like a child.  
And to their speech the waves reply,  
The wind and the low waves,  
Whispering and wildly wondering why  
They talk of ghosts and graves.

They are as graves, they are as ghosts,  
They are as sphinxes set  
For umpires on these desolate coasts  
With life and death at fret:  
Life with her grass and juniper,  
Death with his cloud of sand,  
She strives with him and he with her  
Between the lake and land.

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The poplars and the pines are hers  
His are the sands and wind;  
Sometimes his desperate breathing blurs  
The air till she grows blind.  
She clutches up the dune to seek  
Sometime his throat to kill;  
And always the troubled waters speak,  
Always the sea-gulls shrill.

The wind is fellow once with Death,  
Storming against the land;  
He howls across the hills, his breath  
Burdened with snow and sand.  
The wind is fellow once with Life,  
Sweeping against the sea,  
Sweeping across the waves in strife  
With Death for enemy.

Yet life and death and land and lake—  
To him what things are these?  
Whether the sand-dunes shoreward shake,  
Fleeing the broken seas,  
Whether the water be as glass  
Or wild beasts without chains,  
They change and shift and scud and pass,  
Only the wind remains!

*November on the Lake Michigan Dunes*

Only the wind! The dead leaves flee,  
Like smoke the blue lake fades,  
The hills flow down into the sea,  
And night and day like shades  
About a carried lantern run,  
Jigging alternately,  
And star and moon and bolted sun  
Slide crazily in the sky.

O God! The whole world, like the dunes,  
Dances fantastic-wise  
Down to what end, before what tunes,  
Beneath what dancing skies!  
And blown along like grains of sand  
Ourselves must whirl and flee  
Before a wind across the land  
Into what open sea!

*Howard Mumford Jones*

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TRENCH POEMS

MARCHING

My eyes catch ruddy necks  
Sturdily pressed back.  
All a red-brick moving glint,  
Like flaming pendulums, hands  
Swing across the khaki—  
Mustard colored khaki—  
To the automatic feet.

We husband the ancient glory  
In these bared necks and hands.  
Not broke is the forge of Mars;  
But a subtler brain beats iron  
To shoe the hoofs of death.  
Who paws dynamic air now?—  
Blind fingers loose an iron cloud  
To rain immortal darkness  
On strong eyes.

BREAK OF DAY IN THE TRENCHES

The darkness crumbles away—  
It is the same old Druid Time as ever.  
Only a live thing leaps my hand—

*Break of Day in the Trenches*

A queer sardonic rat—  
As I pull the parapet's poppy  
To stick behind my ear.  
Droll rat, they would shoot you if they knew  
Your cosmopolitan sympathies  
(And God knows what antipathies).  
Now you have touched this English hand  
You will do the same to a German—  
Soon, no doubt, if it be your pleasure  
To cross the sleeping green between.  
It seems you inwardly grin as you pass:  
Strong eyes, fine limbs, haughty athletes,  
Less chanced than you for life;  
Bonds to the whims of murder,  
Sprawled in the bowels of the earth,  
The torn fields of France.  
What do you see in our eyes  
At the boom, the hiss, the swiftness,  
The irrevocable earth buffet—  
A shell's haphazard fury.  
What rootless poppies dropping? . . . . .  
But mine in my ear is safe,  
Just a little white with the dust.

*Isaac Rosenberg*

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MATERNITY

*I am here, my beloved*

Sturdy is earth,  
Dull and mighty,  
Unresentful.

Of her own fertility  
Covering her scars  
With healing green.

You cannot anger earth,  
You cannot cause her pain,  
Nor make her remember  
Your hungry, querulous love.

At last your unwilling body  
She tranquilly accepts,  
And turns it to her uses.

EPITAPHS

I

Here lies a lady  
Who smothered before she died—  
Crushing every impulse of her soul  
For prudence sake.  
Only her body lived  
To be buried.

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II

Sacred to the memory  
Of a genius who lied  
From necessity, from pleasure, and from habit.  
If this be his soul, this sturdy shade,  
Perverse but virile even in death,  
He will deny it.

III

Here sleeps  
Earth's hungry child.

IV

Beautiful lady,  
Even death is your courtly lover,  
Bearing you in his arms to infinity  
With tenderness.

V

Here lies a man  
Who wasted in a hundred places  
A bit of his soul.  
Yet even now it has a certain life,  
Like the vague sighing  
Of a multitude of insects  
Dancing in the twilight.

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### VI

Her spirit, a shining blade  
Piercing her breast,  
Pierced even the veil of death.  
And we who knew her know  
It never can lie sheathed  
In eternal mist.

### VII

A man lies here  
Who took sport seriously,  
Forgetting life.  
His soul, like a lost ball,  
Lies happy as a field mouse,  
Or a cricket,  
In the long grass.

### VIII

Here lies one  
Whose glowing faith,  
Shouting hosannas through the dark,  
Shall see its God  
Even as the sprouting grain  
The sun.

*Marjorie Allen Seiffert*



## RELIGION

In a far olden time  
On the marge of some era Devonian,  
When budding breezes began to sweep  
The tops of the fern-tree fronds,  
The little wild people clinging along the roots  
Quivered with apprehension.  
By and by they dared to look up.  
"There is a Something there," they said.  
"It is God," they cried,  
And hid themselves.

By and by a mole crept along  
And stirred the grass.  
"It is God," the people said,  
And shrank away terrified.

After some eons,  
One who was akin to prophets whispered,  
"Let us make for ourselves an image of God  
Like a mole."  
And they did so.

They made him like a cat, like an ox, like a serpent.  
They devised a flying horse, a grifon, a dragon.  
They imagined winged angels,  
Guardian angels,

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Lost angels.

"These are gods and part-gods," they said;

"They live on a Hill in the Sky

On the top of the Great Mountain.

Sometime they will come down

And talk with us."

Time went on and I was born.

And I, too, heard a mystic breathing

Trembling delicately among the tree-tops.

I listened in a trance. And I said, "It is God!"

A little blind mole crept by my feet.

"It is the gentle touch of God," I cried in ecstasy.

But when I looked into your god-like eyes, my friend,

My heart almost stopped beating in its joy.

"Now do I verily see God!" I exulted.

## GHOSTS OF PAST TIME

An interminable procession of ghosts of past time  
Floats continually by me in my dreams.

And they all reach out their hands to me,

Warning, appealing, commanding.

A few seem benign;

But though their touch is soft as snow,

They have a grip like iron.

*Ghosts of Past Time*

Some were builders, and they cry, "Build like me!"  
And some were wiseacres, and they demand, "Think like me!"  
And some were poets, and they whisper, "Sing like me!"

I throw you off, O you ghosts of past time!  
As for me,  
I will work along your tiresome squares and cubes,  
But I will not build like you, O builders!  
I will eat your nauseous wisdoms, O wiseacres,  
But I will not think like you!  
I will move in your deepest rhythms,  
But I will not sing like you, O poets!  
Like myself only will I think and build and sing—  
And not like any of you!  
Even you, my veritable brothers  
Who died but yesterday,  
I am not thinking of you—  
But of some one to be born tomorrow.

*Martha Foote Crow*

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THE COUNSELS OF O'RIORDAN, THE  
RANNMAKER

The choirs of Heaven are tokened in a harp-string,  
A pigeon's egg is as crafty as the stars.  
My heart is shaken by the crying of the lapwing,  
And yet the world is full of foolish wars.

There's gold on the whin-bush every summer morning.  
There's struggling discourse in the grunting of a pig:  
Yet churls will be scheming, and churls will be scorning,  
And half the dim world is ruled by thimbleric.

The luck of God is in two strangers meeting,  
But the gates of hell are in the city street  
For him whose soul is not in his own keeping  
And love a silver string upon his feet.

My heart is the seed of time, my veins are star-dust,  
My spirit is the axle of God's dreams.  
Why should my august soul be worn or care-tost?—  
Lo, God is but a lamp, and I his gleam.

There's little to be known, and that not kindly,  
But an ant will burrow through a five-inch wall;  
There's nothing rises up or falls down blindly:  
That's a poor share of wisdom, but it's all.

*T. D. O'Bolger*

## MODERN LAMENTATIONS

### GIVE AND TAKE

I gave you everything:  
My sorrows amused you and my fame.  
You gave me everything again:  
Care, suffering, shame.

I gave you everything;  
I let you daub my love with filthy lust.  
You gave me everything again:  
Ashes and bitter dust.

I gave you everything:  
Children, toil, gold.  
You gave me everything again—  
The purse of life is empty that I hold.

I gave you everything:  
With jewels of song I made and left you fair.  
You gave me everything again:  
Old age, despair.

Now there is nothing more that I can give—  
Useless to me now anything but the grave.  
I shall pass out to the night, but you can live,  
Unless you have flung away the things I gave.

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### THE EVERLASTING CONTRADICTION

Yesterday I borrowed thirty silver pence  
From Judas: he gave them with a grin.  
Today, O Christ, I kneel before your cross.

Yesterday the Magdalen came to me and said,  
"I am starving." I answered, "First, to bed."  
Today, O Christ, I kneel before your cross.

Yesterday the Virgin passed sorrowing in the street:  
I flung a brick at her. Then, as was meet,  
I bore her to the house of Caiphas.  
Today, O Christ, I kneel before your cross.

Yesterday Pilate asked me for water: I must go.  
He beat me, for the ewer trembled so.  
Today, O Christ, I kneel before your cross.

Yesterday, today, tomorrow, I am vile:  
You hang there motionless and dead long while—  
In your eyes, nothing; on your lips, a smile.  
The world is rotten: would 'twould crash and pile  
Upon me kneeling yet before your cross!

## *Blind People*

### BLIND PEOPLE

Each day when I try to cross the street,  
I find I cannot go my way:  
The street is too crowded with blind people.

They jostle me into gutters,  
They fling me curses from livid lips,  
They strike me with their heavy sticks—  
They, the blind, hating all who see.

Yet they huddle and press upon me,  
Fawning and saying sweet false things—  
Whenever they would borrow my eyesight  
To look for some penny lost in the gutter.

### WHY THE WAR?

They went to a field, and there lay two swords and two  
ploughshares;  
And the first man said, "Plow, brother."  
But the second man frowned, and growled, tossing his head,  
"We must kill each other."

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"The fruits of earth are beautiful—flowers and fruits,  
From the warm breast of earth, our mother."

"Flower and fruit are for fools who want them, and beauty  
to boot!

We must kill each other."

"Then let us strive, if you will, but only in peace;  
In life let us conquer each other."

"Death settles the contest more quickly; one cut will release:  
We must kill each other."

"If death settles all, why then either fight or strive?  
Let us sit down on the grass and weep for each other."

"Because only so can the farce be played to the last:  
Draw, brother."

*John Gould Fletcher*



## EDITORIAL COMMENT

### THEN AND NOW



THE holiday festivities are close upon us—Christmas, with its multiform invitation to worldliness confusing and obliterating its spiritual significance; the New Year, with its hope of fresh life through the cold, its gleam of sunshine over snow: both set with full dramatic intensity against the world's super-activities of peace and war.

As they approach in a glorious and confusing riot, the eighteenth century seems a satisfactory age to live in—some Jane-Austen village of narrow boundaries and prim ideals. The weaver and cobbler down the little street, bread and meat in the neighboring farms, splendor in the squire's mansion, and religion in the little old church whose bell pealed out a welcome on Sundays. The vast world lumbering in and out once or twice a week in the stage-coach from London, so many leagues away; bringing ideas in the *Lovers' Annual* or the *Gentleman's Magazine*. An orderly, finished world, with a definite social system in which one kept one's place, and a neat little round of duties and pleasures patterned against a pearl-gray background of leisure.

Instead of that, behold me—almost any me—in this particularly distracting season. We will pass over my particular business of editing a magazine—almost any business nowadays brings mail from the ends of the earth, a

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queer sense of intimacy with the antipodes! To me—almost any me—comes this autumn the election; and to the feminine me, in these parts, the exceeding great thrill of casting her first vote for president—the climax of soulful communings and quarrellings in the newly opened field. And after the quiet ballot in an alcove comes the swift rolling-in of states, like vast billows, through a stormy night of search-lights, tin horns, steam whistles and caterwauling crowds; and then the backwater tides of doubt for hours and days.

And through the clamor of politics sounds the call of the arts: the Art Institute opens new galleries—much more spacious than our magazine-gallery for poets—in which hundreds of painters and sculptors, from Maine to Oregon, speak for beauty with still voices, stretch out invisible hands appealing for recognition. And the new Arts Club hits us between the eyes by contrasting Sargent with Henry Dearth, the latest old with the newest new. Blow on blow is struck, ringing bell on bell.

Then there are the plays. Curtains rising everywhere: on *Mrs. Warren's Profession* and *Medea*, on *Henry VIII* and *Justice*—sermons, all of them, however they may conceal or betray it. And a French company—straight from Paris—is playing *Le Misanthrope* and *Sans-Gêne*. And little local companies are experimenting delicately—with Ben Hecht's dark *Dregs*, and Kenneth Goodman's gay harlequinade, *The Wonder-hat*, and with Maxwell Bodenheim's fine brief tragedy of the cosmos, *Brown*, in which the process of life is symbolized by colors, personified as women who

dance out the cycle of creation and sink into the embrace of brown darkness at last.

Also the call of music will not be denied—the orchestra, the recitals, the choral concerts. And the opera unrolls its gilded scroll—a mediaeval mummer using all the arts to pattern gorgeously the extravagant melodrama of his emotion.

The clubs, philanthropies, civic activities—these also are insistent demands, not to be denied.

Into this clamor of many voices, this ringing of many bells, comes the questioner. Suddenly our occidental civilization—the modern organization of society, of The Nation, for selfish ends; for greed, whose weapon is violence—is challenged by the Bengali poet and sage, Rabindranath Tagore, who now wears the international crown decreed to him since he first befriended us with his presence, and this magazine with his poems, four years ago. Something in his quiet dignity makes our over-activity seem absurd. Will there be any power left for life if we heed so many calls, try to follow so many paths?

In his lecture, *What Is Art?*, Mr. Tagore—or rather, Sir Rabindranath—was at the opposite pole from Tolstoi. Art is life's surplusage, her excess of joy, which she returns in beauty to her creator; essentially an act of rapture, of worship. And the tall Hindu, as he uttered his dithyrambic finale, was unconsciously an illustration of his theme—the ideal poet whose art has been one long devotion, springing from excess of concentrated spiritual life; the ideal poet

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of the orient, moreover, whose very presence is a wide-winged benediction of peace.

How many of our poets have learned the secret? What is it to me that I am fed, clothed and sheltered by a million hands in all the ends of the earth, and informed of the world's news by a million minds? What is it to me that I am speeded around the world in motors and steamers and trains, and through still larger domains in art and talk and books? The point is, do these things magnify life or obliterate it? How shall I live in and through, by and with, above and beyond, all these? H. M.

### LAZY CRITICISM

The other day Mr. Max Eastman, editor of *The Masses*, stepped out of his own back door and into the front door of *The New Republic* to say what he had to say about *Lazy Verse* and those who write it. He couldn't, of course, have said it at home, without violating the laws of hospitality.

We sympathize with Mr. Eastman. . . .

It is high time that a critic objected to *vers libre*, not on the score of rhythm—a phase of the subject endlessly debatable, but on the score of style, and for a few moments it looked as if Mr. Eastman were about to prove the one exception who would establish the intelligence of the tribe. But alas, no. Mr. Eastman compares “the new dilute variety of prosy poetry which is watering the country” to journalism—a comparison obviously insulting to the latter. For while journalism, generally speaking, may not be literature,

## Lazy Criticism

much of what Mr. Eastman calls lazy verse has not even achieved the level of a good piece of journalism. For instance, Mr. Eastman's apostrophe to a blank-book, which he submits as showing that all one has to do to make a poem today is to say something, does not really say much, and what it does say it says badly—it is not good journalism, although it is rhythmical and almost, if not wholly, metrical.

No, instead of indicating that what keeps journalism from being literature is exactly what keeps much *vers libre* from being poetry—and also what keeps much metrical verse from being poetry—and literature, Mr. Eastman falls into the very pitfalls that all the other critics have dug, and he even falls deeper in—buries himself like an exploding shell. For the total effect of his article is to put a halo about the head of anyone who writes metrical verse, however poor; to imply that there is some magic property in an arbitrary patterns, which of itself induces high powers or “the intense rhapsodies of art.” By direct inference from this article, all *vers libre* is journalism, all metrical verse literature—a conclusion hard to accept.

In fact, Mr. Eastman's article itself is an example, not of fine and discriminating criticism, but of that very slipshod journalism which he affects to scorn. He has the courage of generalities—a journalistic trait, but not of particulars; and criticism adheres in particulars. He lumps all the writers of *vers libre*, with the exception of Whitman, Blake, King Solomon, Giovannianni and Tagore, into the discard. Those who found schools, or who have the tag of

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a school, are necessarily inferior: a sweeping generalization—(and this from Mr. Eastman, who believes in the organization of labor, and the disorganization of capitalized gangs like publishers, etc.!)

What poetry needs today is a critic who has the courage to discriminate among his contemporaries, no matter with what schools their names may be associated, whether by accident or design; one who will uphold a standard of good style, a standard of literature, by which both *vers libre* and metrical verse may be judged, and accepted or rejected. It takes courage to criticize one's contemporaries, but a critic who ventures only along the secure routes of the past, or of accepted opinion, ventures nothing. Mr. Eastman has avoided the issue.

. . . . .

Apropos of the aboriginal indolence of the writer of *vers libre*, it is interesting to quote what Mr. Littell has to say of Swinburne in the same number of *The New Republic* in which Mr. Eastman's article appeared:

Often you wonder, as you read on and on, whether his habit was not to start a poem with some fragment that occurred of itself, and then to make more fragments in the same metre, until his ear desired another metre, when he would take what he had written, choose a first stanza and a last, and let the others arrange themselves. What are they like, these long and structureless poems, as empty of meaning as of movement from mood to mood? They are like blown fires that spread without arriving, like champing swift horses always in the same place, like huge elusive bellying sails that the mind cannot furl. The emptiness is filled with lines that call and clang, with a rushing wind of rhythm, with a musical movement repeated and repeated until it gets into one's blood, and the pulse beats to its measure, and long after the wind has blown itself out the waves keep up their rolling and washing.

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And yet it is the people who do not respond to this form of "rhapsodic trance" who are, Mr. Eastman says, "people so neutralized by effete parlor civilization that their vital organs are incapable of resounding to the fundamental trance-engendering stroke of the tom-tom. They are incapable of hypnosis. They are incapable of "naively falling asleep to dream." But is it not our effete parlor civilization that has produced this very verse with its empty, meaningless song? And if we demand a sharper sense of reality along with fundamental rhythms, is it then because we are stultified with civilization?

The difference between the hypnosis induced by this sophisticated poetry, and that of primitive poetry, is this: that whereas with primitive poetry the effect is produced by the reiteration of a single line or image, the sense of which is enlarged and intensified by repetition or by the "trance-engendering" beat of the tom-tom; with the kind of poetry spoken of above, the effect is produced by the rhythmical succession of phrases, the meaning and sense of which are lost in the mechanical drum-beat furnished by the verse itself. Take away the drum-beat of the latter form of verse and you have nothing left. Take away the tom-tom from primitive poetry, take away even the repetition of the phrase, and you still have the vital heart of the poem—the emotional image.

I can not follow Mr. Eastman's psychology. He implies that indulgence in *vers libre* is an example of aboriginal indolence; then he says that it is because we lack primitive

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qualities, because of "too much neural excitation and too little of the booming pulse of the blood", that we do not respond to the refinements of civilized verse. *Vers libre* is not, Mr. Eastman says, "a return to primitive, naive or simple styles of writing," but the height of effort at sophisticated stimulation of a jaded perception." But could it not be, is it not in fact, both?

To say that poets write the new free verse out of sheer indolence, to escape the restrictions imposed upon them by metrical rhymed verse, is nonsense. If anything, the metrical pattern offers a greater opportunity to the naturally indolent and lazy mind. At least it seems easier to disguise lack of thought and feeling when a conventional metrical pattern and a rhyme scheme are adopted. It is also foolish to think that *vers libre* is not "a medium offering a vigorous resistance of its own," simply because that resistance is less obvious. The poet knows that it is just as hard to write good free verse as it is to write good metrical verse. When either achieves the level of poetry, the distinction between the two is unimportant.

Marlowe and his contemporaries did not engage the medium of blank verse because it offered less resistance than rhymed verse. Poets really do not react against conventional forms for indolent or for journalistic reasons. There is always an artistic, a psychological basis for such reactions. The poet who uses *vers libre* is simply reacting against the kind of swaddling metrical rhythm suffocating the sense employed by Swinburne and other poets, and more especially



## Lazy Criticism

by their less gifted followers. The reaction against this stultifying, deadening cloak of rhythm is as natural, and as justifiable artistically, as was Wordsworth's reaction against poetic diction and rhetoric. This is not to say that everyone who writes *vers libre* is a poet any more than that everyone who writes metrical verse has a right to the laurels with which Mr. Eastman crowns him. If the medium of *vers libre* has seemed to offer to prose-writers an easy method of rushing into print as poets, it is nevertheless true that the hand of the prose-writer can invariably be detected in free verse; nor does the mediocre poet do a bit better in this form than in his more conventional patterns. (Mr. Eastman no doubt would deny the word "form" to *vers libre*. But *vers libre* has form exactly as clouds have form, and as infinite a variety of patterns, although none may be regular or narrowly symmetrical.) Certainly no greater amount of "aching feeling" is poured into free verse today than was formerly expressed with a fatal and glib facility through the medium of metres of every known variety under the sun. This I have every reason to know.

I am very, very tired of the futile discussion about the relative merits of *vers libre* and metrical verse. It really does not matter in which medium a poet chooses to express himself so long as he gives us real poetry, and I refuse to believe that either medium is too easy or too hard or too old-fashioned or too new to serve as a vehicle for the poet who is capable of using it.

A. C. H.

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### REVIEWS

#### MR. YEATS' NEW BOOK

*Responsibilities and Other Poems*, by W. B. Yeats. Macmillan Co.

Mr. Yeats' new volume contains the poems which have previously appeared in the Cuala editions of *Responsibilities* and *The Green Helmet*. Many of the short poems have appeared in POETRY and I have already written reviews of separate parts of the new volume. There is therefore little need of more than an announcement of the new and more convenient edition.

What strikes one on going through the larger book is the simple fact that Mr. Yeats has not "gone off". He is the only poet of his decade who has not gradually faded into mediocrity, who has not resigned himself to gradually weaker echoes of an earlier outburst.

The new poems, now that their bulk is equal to that of the two earlier volumes of poems, hold their own; they establish their own tonality. I do not mean that every poem is a masterpiece, or that every poem is important, or that every poem would start a new reputation for an author not yet known. But the collection as a whole is worthy of the collections that preceded it. There is a new robustness; there is the tooth of satire which is, in Mr. Yeats' case, too good a tooth to keep hidden. *The Coat*, the wild wolf-dog that will not praise his fleas, *The Scholars*, are all the sort of poem that we would gladly read more of. There

### Mr. Yeats' New Book

are a lot of fools to be killed and Mr. Yeats is an excellent slaughter-master, when he will but turn from ladies with excessive chevelure appearing in pearl-pale nuances.

We have all been bewitched with the "glamour", and the glamour is still there in *The Wind Among the Reeds* for those who still want it. But the light in *The Magi* and *The Peacock* is a no less valuable light, and born of a no less powerful magic. The ragged hat in *Biscay Bay* is a sign of the poet's relationship to his brother Jack Yeats, and a far cry from the bridles of Findrinny. But, despite such occasional bits of realism, the tone of the new book is romantic. Mr. Yeats is a romanticist, symbolist, occultist, for better or worse, now and for always. That does not matter. What does matter is that he is the only one left who has sufficient intensity of temperament to turn these modes into art.

*Reveries Over Childhood and Youth*, appearing in a uniform Macmillan edition, is written in a clearer and harder prose than most of Mr. Yeats' earlier prose books. One might announce it here as an extended annotation or appendix to some of his earlier poems. E. P.

#### OTHER BOOKS OF VERSE

*A Marriage Cycle*, by Alice Freeman Palmer. Houghton Mifflin Co.

I opened this book with some hesitation—would this strongly executive woman, whom so many thousands loved and honored, prove to have been indeed a poet?

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I need not have feared. And her husband, the editor, need not have apologized for the "incompleteness and raggedness" of some of these poems. It is true that certain ones show, by their uncertain technique, that she was starting timidly in a new adventure. Even these, however, have simplicity and sincerity, qualities which rise to perfect art in a few lyrics. Indeed, it is astonishing that a woman of such intensively literary training should have cast off all literary impedimenta in writing her poems.

The deepest beauty of a rich and noble nature—and, incidentally, the deepest beauty of marriage—are revealed in this *Cycle*, especially in poems like *The Dress*, *Summer Rain*, *Myself*, *The Last Anniversary*, and this fine lyric, *Parting*:

Dear love, it was so hard to say  
Goodby today!  
You turned to go, yet going turned to stay,  
Till suddenly at last you went away.

Then all at last I found my love unsaid,  
And bowed my head;  
And went in tears up to my lonely bed.  
Oh, would it be like this if you were dead?

H. M.

*London, One November*, by Helen Mackay. Duffield & Co.

Most of these poems are in free verse. Yet there is form in Miss Mackay's freedom. *A House* is full of feeling and must make its appeal wherever it is read. The death of the son of this house in the war has just been told in London.

House, great house, how can you stay quiet like that,  
When your only son is killed?  
Why do you not cry out, cry out to London?

## Other Books of Verse

Years, lives, stones, iron, rust, bones, mould and mildew of the centuries, call to this poet, and she voices their souls. *Roads Calling* is very lyrical and haunting. It has been said of a prose work by this author that it has the grace of Maeterlinck's delicate reveries, and this is true of many of her poems. *Wind and Shadows*, with its lure of the mystical, hidden, might have been written by Maeterlinck himself. *Train* is full of Maeterlinckian lines; take, for instance, these:

Terrible that the minutes go.  
Terrible that the minutes never go.

.....  
God, make the train start!  
Before they cannot bear it!

A carper might call Miss Mackay's poems reminiscent, for she takes frankly what past languages and literatures have offered to her, as our modern composers have not hesitated to take, for all their originality, the message of the ages. She knows her Bible, and often flavors her stanzas with a turn from the Litany. And we hear the Song of Solomon singing through her lines. If her reminiscence is excusable, it is because she has something to say. The following brief quotation is a fair example of her clear thought:

White moon of trees and towers,  
Sailing, sailing,  
So calm and high,  
You look upon the France of war,  
And the thing of all most cruel  
Is your peace.

A. F.

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*Collected Poems*, by Condé Benoist Pallen. P. J. Kenedy and Sons, New York.

*Collected Poems* always has a large sound; but in this case the book does not reach up to its title. The first pages are devoted to *The New Rubaiyat*, written after the mellow pattern of Omar himself. Here the author's object appears to be to tell the lusty-lunged singer of the vine that neither his song nor his lesson is new and that his argument is false. *A Fable for Lydia*, *The Death of Sir Launcelot*, and other long poems follow, with here and there a short lyric. There are two dramas, *Agläë*, and *The Feast of Thalarchus*. All these titles give an idea of the author's range—the same lofty themes that have been treated from time immemorial. We come upon tritenesses, such as "earth's sweet acclaim." For those of a religious turn of mind this book will be of interest; to others it will be dull. Two sonnets, *The Babe*, are full of charm, however, and Mr. Pallen has two sonnets on the sonnet, hardly approaching Rossetti's *A sonnet is a moment's monument*, perhaps, but with good thought and poetical lines. A. F.

*The Child and Other Verses*, by Mary Louisa Anderson. Knickerbocker Press, New York.

*The Child*, which gives this book its title, reminds me of the sort of poetry I used to write some ten or more years ago, and of the Christ-child poems that were written by many others some ten or more years ago. Have we advanced beyond or have we receded from those years, that this type

## Other Books of Verse

seems to have lost its appeal to-day? But here is a thing that surely moves us—*Winds in the Marshes*, with its sweep of freshness; also these lines:

So walks the wonder up and down,  
Still lovely and unseen.

In spite of "it does," "it doth," and such archaic phrasing, which mar much of this poet's best work, such lines as—

When you, white flower of my life,  
Bloom out upon my dream—

and others of like fragrance, make atonement. The book leaves an impression of beauty and sincerity, and of power to catch and hold the dream. A. F.

*The Christmas Trail and Other Poems*, by Shirley Harvey.  
Privately printed.

*The Christmas Trail* is a little book of college verse by a likable boy. The campus at night, tobacco, the crying melancholy of youth, speculations on death—these fill the pages. Yet there is an occasional lift to something beyond, and a humorous felicity of phrase that give good promise for the future. This for instance:

Here's to—  
The little poets of little thought and song  
Who sing so carelessly—and jog along;  
Who without thought of critic or of gain,  
Go spattering lyrics like an April rain!

E. T.

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### SPECIAL EDITIONS AND TRANSLATIONS

*The Sonnets of Shakespeare, Variorum Edition*, edited by Raymond M. Alden. Houghton Mifflin Company.

With this work—the first of the kind in its field—Professor Alden of Stanford University makes a scholarly contribution toward the celebration of the Shakespeare tercentenary. His book will serve to supplement the Furness variorum edition of the plays; indeed, it enjoys the countenance of the younger Furness, under whom that great enterprise is now continuing.

Professor Alden brings together everything that has been written about the *Sonnets* through two centuries. He does not attempt, however, to blend all these various rays of light into the one white light of truth. Are the *Sonnets* autobiographical, or imaginative, or esoteric? You may decide for yourself. How about their proper order, with its effect on the story they tell? Confusion—how much or little let the self-confident say. How are we to take the dedication—those thirty words which have produced more puzzled comment than any equal number of words ever put to paper? The data, the many arguments pro and con, are here, and you may form your own conclusion. How about the Dark Lady? “The ghost of Mary Fitton is not yet wholly at peace.” How about the Rival Poet? The Chapman theory, while the likeliest, “has been accepted with decidedly uncritical assurance.” Who, who is “Mr. W. H.”? “‘There is’”—here we quote doubly—“‘something sad about working over a vexed problem and getting in the end only nega-



tive results.' " But all the materials for treating every vexed point are present; so the reader may struggle for himself: the editor has "listened to all the schools of interpretation without having become a proselyte of any."

A new era for the study of the *Sonnets* opened with the examination of the French poets of the half-century preceding Shakespeare. Mr. Alden is somewhat influenced—as who would not be?—by Lee's *French Renaissance in England*, with its demonstration that most of the matter and manner in vogue during the Elizabethan sonnet-craze comes straight from Ronsard and his mates of the Pléiade, particularly Jodelle and Du Bellay. In these men we find the impassioned appeals to a high-born patron, the warning that youthful beauty will perish utterly unless it propagate itself; the promise of enduring fame through poetical celebration, and even the denunciation of a false mistress of dark complexion. The consequent view that the *Sonnets* were written in a kind of competitive following of a lyrical fashion of the Renaissance has naturally been bolstered up by the scientifically-minded Germans—by Wolff, for example. But even here our editor saves himself. Such critics, he feels, are "too little disposed to realize the extent to which an artificial form may express a real experience and be saturated by personal feeling."

And here, it may be, is the way out. Shakespeare happened to be a great poet; and a great poet cannot keep up a mere literary exercise through an hundred and fifty-four sonnets. Grant that he began as the follower of a rather

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trivial and shallow convention: the instrument in hand presently showed itself worthy of better and deeper use. Say that our poet, with much in his heart and much on his mind, and possibly something on his conscience, began by splashing and frolicking idly with others on the edge of the vast sea: the waves beckoned, the waters became deeper and wilder, and soon he was involved, chin-deep or more, in a desperate life-struggle with real and rending passion—a struggle that, later, made possible *Hamlet* and *Lear* and brought him through, saved, to the reconciling amenities of *The Tempest*. Those who have lived in the *Sonnets* most deeply will not incline to accept any mechanistic or fictional or mystical mode of accounting for them.

The present volume, a high credit both to editor and publishers, must necessarily become part of every library whose owner accepts Shakespeare as Shakespeare and seeks to understand him.

H. B. F.

*The Song of Roland*, translated by Leonard Bacon. Yale University Press.

To the two hundred and ninety-two *laissez* of this ancient literary monument Mr. Bacon adds, by interpolation, a considerable number drawn conscientiously from other sources than the Oxford text. Let us proceed at once to *Laisse cxxxv*, in which Roland blows his first blast:

The mighty horn Count Roland hath put his lips unto.  
He held it well within them, and with all his strength he blew.  
And high are all the summits, and oh, the way is long,  
But a full fifteen good leagues away they heard it echo strong.

This is a fair sample of the style, which can hardly be

### *Special Editions and Translations*

said to start a new era in the translation of old epics. The translator "feels certain that a work like the *Song of Roland* is susceptible of many interpretations." Hence, despite the existence of "several excellent versions in prose and verse," he "has not hesitated to attempt one of his own." The effort shows much faithful industry, but not every reader will feel that it was rewarded. H. B. F.

*Madonna Dianora, A Play in Verse*, by Hugo von Hofmannsthal, translated from the German by Harriet Betty Boas. Richard G. Badger.

On the enveloping paper cover of this play, we read: "*Madonna Dianora* is *Pelléas and Mélisande* set to music." Why mar at the outset a book deserving of praise and confidence? In the first place, *Pelléas and Mélisande* is in itself the very essence of tone. In the second place, it needs no musical setting other than the exquisite gold of Debussy's opera. In the third place, how can one play be the musical setting of another play?

The translator, has brought feeling and art into her English rendering. The play alternates prose and blank verse. To go back to the suggestion of *Pelléas and Mélisande*—as a rule the Germans are matter-of-fact even in their love and romance, therefore Hofmannsthal's work, strong though it be, lacks the elusive, I might say, the stealthy, quality of Maeterlinck's. And how different is *Dianora* from our shrinking little *Mélisande*!—*Dianora*, who could, even when seized by the intense horror of approaching death, exult in flinging at her husband truth upon truth of her sin!

## POETRY: *A Magazine of Verse*

This is a terrible little play, tense from start to finish. We come out of it as from a dark tangle of evil foliage, yet there remains to us, after the actual images have faded away, a haunting sense of beauty and fascination. *A. F.*

### OUR CONTEMPORARIES

#### I

Mr. Samuel McChord Crothers, in the October *Atlantic*, is much concerned over *The Gregariousness of the Minor Poets*. Not being a poet himself, he knows all about it, and dispenses the following pearls of wisdom:

He [The Poet] flourishes in what Milton describes as "a pleasing solitariness."

A poet does not need other poets to bear him company . . . . . He sets his face toward the wilderness which he loves, and is content with the inspiration which may come.

There is nothing more delightful than the discovery of a new poet. . . . . We are eager to hear a fresh, unspoiled voice, and to be cheered by a variation on familiar themes. . . . . He comes with the dew of the morning upon him.

It is a sad day for the new poet when he hears the call of his kind. . . . . The coöperative effort seems to do little for the production of the kind of poetry which the world does "not willingly let die."

Et cetera. Mr. Crothers, as usual, dispenses with amiable garrulity the familiar platitudes of the stand-patter. We advise him to clip the wings of theory and come down to facts. Did Sophocles "set his face toward the wilderness he loved"? Did Shakespeare? did Molière? Goethe? Coleridge? Keats? Was their art a product of the wilderness—a miracle of isolation; or was it in each case merely the

## Our Contemporaries

highest tree in a forest—a climactic product of “coöperative effort,” of the group spirit, its sympathies and rivalries? Did Dante “love the wilderness”—the spiritual isolation—to which his contemporaries condemned him? did Heine? Burns? Blake? Is there any proof, or indeed any probability, that the art of these great men was improved by such isolation?—an isolation which was indeed, in each case, far from complete, as each one had his few sympathetic admirers.

And those Hebrew prophets whom Mr. Crothers knows all about—they may have gone into the wilderness, but did they stay there? They came back hot-footed to shout to the crowd and quarrel with the prophets of Baal.

## II

POETRY, like all other periodicals and individuals who cherish the right, guaranteed by the Constitution, of free speech and a free press, would enter its emphatic protest against the attempt of the self-styled “Society for the Suppression of Vice” to suppress Theodore Dreiser’s novel, *The Genius*, one of the most powerful—nay, formidable—efforts of modern art to interpret modern American life.

Also, POETRY would protest with equal emphasis against influences more insidious and less out-spoken which seem to be working for the extinction of *The Masses*, perhaps the most stimulating of all the periodicals which stand for radical thinking in politics, sociology and art.

A clear path out of all their difficulties to these seekers for truth and beauty, who, unlike some of their opponents, never lack either sincerity or courage.

## POETRY: *A Magazine of Verse*

### III

*The Literary Digest* of recent date says:

Basket-ball failed as a drawing-card at Brown University when Alfred Noyes was lecturing there on poetry one afternoon. The time of the two events coincided, and when the manager of the game ran his eyes over the vacant seats he called off the event and went to join the crowd that was listening to Noyes.

This is as it should be. We may have questioned the propriety of giving Mr. Noyes a Princeton professorship, but as a reader of ballads, from *Chevy Chase* to Kipling, he may be just the man to initiate the sportive undergraduate mind.

### ANNOUNCEMENT

Under the auspices of this magazine the Chicago Little Theater will give this winter a series of lectures by poets. *Twelve Talks by Poets on Poetry* is the general title of the series, which it is to be hoped will stimulate interest in the art through personalities which cannot be exactly conveyed by the written word. Each poet will, in addition to reading from his or her own poems, speak of his method of work and his theories of the art.

In the first lecture, on November 19th, Miss Harriet Monroe presented the historical background of the new movement, besides reading from her own poems. In the second, on November 26th, Vachel Lindsay personally explained and illustrated his *Poem Games*. Padraic Colum, the Irish poet, will speak on December 3rd, and Witter Bynner on December 10th. Among the other speakers will

## Announcement

be Amy Lowell, Carl Sandburg, Arthur Davison Ficke, Eunice Tietjens, Mary Aldis, Florence Kiper Frank, and later in the season Wilfrid Wilson Gibson, the English poet.

The lectures are held at the Little Theater in the Fine Arts Building, on Sunday afternoons at half after four.

## NOTES

Mr. John Gould Fletcher, of Arkansas, now resident in London, was recently awarded one of POETRY's prizes for his *Arizona Poems*. Mr. Fletcher's latest book is *Goblins and Pagodas*, and he is represented in *Some Imagist Poets* (both Houghton-Mifflin Co.). It will be noted that he has not abandoned the use of rhyme.

Miss Edith Wyatt, of Chicago, has contributed verse to POETRY, of whose Advisory Committee she is a member, and to other magazines; and she is the author of novels and other works. Mrs. Eunice Tietjens, since her recent return from China, has also been on the staff of the magazine.

Mr. Joseph Warren Beach, formerly in the faculty of the University of Minnesota and now resident in California, has appeared once or twice before in POETRY. Also Mr. Howard Mumford Jones, who left Chicago this year to accept an instructorship in the University of Texas. And the Rev. Charles L. O'Donnell is in the faculty of the University of Notre Dame, Ind. Miss Winifred Webb, of Pasadena, has appeared in POETRY and other magazines.

Of the four poets new to our readers:

Mrs. Martha Foote Crowe, of New York, has published one or two books of verse and appeared in various periodicals. Marjorie Allen Seiffert (Mrs. Otto S.), of Moline, Ill., is known as a composer of songs, but has not yet published a book of verse.

Mr. Isaac Rosenberg, formerly a student of the Slade School of Art in London, is now a member of the British army in France.

Mr. T. D. O'Bolger, a native of Kilkenny, Ireland, came to this country at twenty-one, and for the past twelve years has been in the English department of the University of Pennsylvania.

## POETRY: *A Magazine of Verse*

### BOOKS RECEIVED

#### ORIGINAL VERSE:

- Californians*, by Robinson Jeffers. Macmillan Co.  
*Rhythmic Waves*, by J. C. Churt. Elkin Mathews, London.  
*Men, Women and Ghosts*, by Amy Lowell. Macmillan Co.  
*Completion of Coleridge's Christabel*, by Edna Wahler. Cochrane Pub. Co., New York.  
*Acrostic Sonnets and Other Poems*, by J. E. O'Connor. Privately printed.  
*The Witch of Endor*, by Robert Norwood. George H. Doran Co.  
*My Soldier Boy*, by Mrs. John Archibald Morison. Gorham Press.  
*From Dawn to Eve*, by Julia Wickham Greenwood. Gorham Press.  
*Smoky Roses*, by Lyman Bryson. G. P. Putnam's Sons.  
*Salt-water Poems and Ballads*, by John Masefield. Macmillan Co.  
*Green Branches*, by James Stephens. Macmillan Co.  
*Love and Losses of Pierrot*, by William Griffith. Robert J. Shores, New York.  
*Friendship and Other Poems*, by B. H. Nadal. Robert J. Shores.  
*Amores*, by D. H. Lawrence. B. W. Huebsch, New York.  
*The Testament of William Windune and Other Poems*, by J. H. Wallis, Yale Univ. Press, New Haven, Conn., and Oxford Univ. Press, London.  
*Swords for Life*, by Irene Rutherford McLeod. B. W. Huebsch, New York.  
*Jordan Farms*, by Frederick E. Pierce. Yale Univ. Press.  
*The Story of Eleusis*, by Louis V. Ledoux. Macmillan Co.  
*The Song of the Plow*, by Maurice Hewlett. Macmillan Co.  
*The Complete Poetical Works of John Hay*. Houghton-Mifflin Co.  
*Sonnets of My Life*, by Nita Pierson. Philopolis Press, San Francisco.  
*The Lamp of Poor Souls*, by Marjorie L. C. Pickthall. John Lane Co.  
*Mountain Interval*, by Robert Frost. Henry Holt & Co.
- #### PLAYS:
- Six One Act Plays*, by Margaret Scott Oliver. Richard G. Badger.  
*Read-aloud Plays*, by Horace Holley. Mitchell Kennerley.
- #### TRANSLATIONS:
- Gray's Elegy Written in a Country Churchyard*. Put into French Verse by R. L. S. Privately printed.  
*The Sunlit Hours*, by Emile Verhaeren, translated by Charles R. Murphy. John Lane Co.



JANUARY, 1917

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THE NEWS



HE buzzer boomed, and instantly the clang  
Of hammers dropped, just as the fendered  
bow  
Bumped with soft splash against the wharf;  
though now  
Again within the Yard a hammer rang—  
A solitary hammer striking steel  
Somewhere aloft—and strangely, stridently  
Echoed as though it struck the steely sky—  
The low, cold, steely sky.

She seemed to feel  
That hammer—in her heart—blow after blow  
In a strange clanging hollow seemed to strike  
Monotonous, unrelenting, cruel-like,  
Her heart that such a little while ago  
Had been so full, so happy with its news  
Scarce uttered even to itself.

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It stopped,  
That dreadful hammer. And the silence dropped  
Again a moment. Then a clatter of shoes  
And murmur of voices as the men trooped out:  
And as each wife with basket and hot can  
Hurried towards the gate to meet her man,  
She too ran forward, and then stood in doubt  
Because among them all she could not see  
The face that usually was first of all  
To meet her eyes.

Against the grimy wall  
That towered black above her to the sky,  
With trembling knuckles to the cold stone pressed  
Till the grit seemed to eat into the bone,  
And her stretched arm to shake the solid stone,  
She stood, and strove to calm her troubled breast—  
Her breast, whose trouble of strange happiness,  
So sweet and so miraculous as she  
Had stood among the chattering company  
Upon the ferry-boat, to strange distress  
Was changed. An unknown terror seemed to lie  
For her behind that wall, so cold and hard  
And black above her, in the unseen Yard,  
Dreadfully quiet now.

Then with a sigh  
Of glad relief she ran towards the gate  
As he came slowly out, the last of all.

The terror of the hammer and the wall  
Fell from her as, a woman to her mate,  
She moved with happy heart and smile of greeting—  
A young and happy wife whose only thought  
Was whether he would like the food she'd brought,  
Whose one desire, to watch her husband eating.

With a grave smile he took his bait from her,  
And then without a word they moved away,  
To where some grimy baulks of timber lay  
Beside the river, and 'twas quieter  
Than in the crowd of munching, squatting men  
And chattering wives and children. As he eat,  
With absent eyes upon the river set,  
She chattered too a little now and then  
Of household happenings; and then silently  
They sat and watched the grimy-flowing stream,  
Dazed by the stunning din of hissing steam  
Escaping from an anchored boat hard by;  
Each busy with their own thoughts, who till now  
Had shared each thought, each feeling, speaking out  
Easily, eagerly, without a doubt,  
As innocent, happy children, anyhow,  
The innermost secrets of their wedded life.  
So, as the dinner hour went swiftly by,  
They sat there for the first time, troubled, shy—  
A silent husband a silent wife.

## POETRY: *A Magazine of Verse*

But she was only troubled by excess  
Of happiness; and as she watched the stream,  
She looked upon her life as in a dream,  
Recalling all its tale of happiness  
Unbroken and unshadowed, since she'd met  
Her man the first time, eighteen months ago. . . .

A keen blue day with sudden flaws of snow  
And sudden sunshine, when she first had set  
Her wondering eyes upon him—gaily clad  
For football in a jersey green and red;  
Knees bare beneath white shorts, his curly head  
Wind-blown and wet—and knew him for her lad.  
He strode towards her down the windy street—  
The wet gray pavements flashing sudden gold  
And gold the unending coils of smoke that rolled  
Unceasingly overhead, fired by a fleet  
Wild glint of glancing sunlight. On he came  
Beside her brother—still a raw uncouth  
Young hobbledehoy—a strapping mettled youth  
In the first pride of manhood, that wild flame  
Touching his hair to fire, his cheeks aglow  
With the sharp stinging wind, his arms aswing:  
And as she watched, she felt the tingling sting  
Of flying flakes, and in a whirl of snow  
A moment he was hidden from her sight.  
It passed, and then before she was aware,  
With white flakes powdering his ruddy hair.

*The News*

He stood before her, laughing in the light,  
In all his bravery of red and green  
Snow-sprinkled. And she laughed, too; in the sun  
They laughed: and in that laughter they were one.

Now, as with kindled eyes on the unseen  
Gray river she sat gazing, she again  
Lived through that moment in a golden dream. . . .  
And then quite suddenly she saw the stream  
Distinct in its cold grimy flowing. Then  
The present with its deeper happiness  
Thrilled her afresh: this wonder strange and new;  
This dream in her young body coming true—  
Incredible, yet certain none the less;  
This news, scarce broken to herself, that she  
Must break to him. She longed to see his eyes  
Kindle to hear it, happy with surprise  
When she should break it to him presently.

But she must wait a while yet. Still too strange,  
Too wonderful for words, she could not share  
Even with him her secret. He sat there  
So quietly, little dreaming of the change  
That had come over her. But when he knew!—  
For he was always one for bairns, was John,  
And this would be his own, their own. There shone  
A strange new light on all since this was true.  
All, all seemed strange: the river and the shore,

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The barges and the wharves with timber piled,  
And all her world familiar from a child,  
Was as a world she'd never seen before.

And he too sat with eyes upon the stream,  
Remembering that day when first the light  
Of her young eyes, with laughter sparkling bright,  
Kindled to his; and as he caught the gleam  
The life within him quickened suddenly  
To fire, and in a world of golden laughter  
They stood alone together; and then after,  
When he was playing with his mates and he  
Hurtled headlong towards the goal, he knew  
Her eyes were on him; and for her alone,  
Who had the merriest eyes he'd ever known  
He played that afternoon. Though until then  
He'd only played to please himself, somehow  
She seemed to have a hold upon him. Now,  
No longer a boy, a man among grown men,  
He'd never have a thought apart from her,  
From her, his mate. . . .

And then that golden night  
When, in a whirl of melody and light,  
Her merry brown eyes flashing merrier,  
They rode together in a gilded car  
That seemed to roll forever round and round,  
In a blind blaze of light and blare of sound,  
For ever and for ever, till afar

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It seemed to bear them from the surging throng  
Of lads and lasses happy in release  
From the week's work in yards, and factories—  
For ever through a land of light and song  
While they sat, rapt in silence, hand in hand,  
And looked into each other's merry eyes:  
They two, together, whirled through Paradise,  
A golden glittering, unearthly land;  
A land where light and melody were one;  
And melody and light, a golden fire  
That ran through their young bodies; and desire,  
A golden music streaming from the sun,  
Filling their veins with golden melody  
And singing fire . . .

And then when quiet fell  
And they together, with so much to tell,  
So much to tell each other instantly,  
Left the hot throng and roar and glare behind,  
Seeking the darker streets, and stood at last  
In a dark lane where footsteps seldom passed—  
Lit by a far lamp and one glowing blind  
That seemed to make the darkness yet more dark  
Between the cliffs of houses, black and high,  
That soared above them to the starry sky,  
A deep blue sky where spark on fiery spark  
The stars for them were kindled, as they raised  
Their eyes in new-born wonder to the night;  
And in a solitude of cold starlight

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They stood alone together, hushed, and gazed  
Into each other's eyes until speech came:  
And underneath the stars they talked and talked. . . .

Then he remembered how they two had walked  
Along a beach that was one golden flame  
Of yellow sand beside a flame-blue sea—  
The day they wedded, that strange day of dream,  
One flame of blue and gold. . . .

The murky stream

Flowed once again before his eyes, and he  
Dropped back into the present; and he knew  
That he must break the news that suddenly  
Had come to him last night, as drowsily  
He lay beside her—startling, stern and true  
Out of the darkness flashing. He must tell  
How, as he lay beside her in the night,  
His heart had told him he must go and fight,  
Must throw up everything he loved so well  
To go and fight in lands across the sea  
Beside the other lads—must throw up all,  
His work, his home. . . .

The shadow of the wall

Fell on her once again, and stridently  
That hammer struck her heart, as from the stream  
She raised her eyes to his, and saw their flame.  
Then back into her heart her glad news came  
As John smiled on her; and her golden dream



*The News*

Once more was all about her as she thought  
Of home, the new home that the future held  
For them—they three together. Fear was quelled  
By this new happiness that all unsought  
Had sprung from the old happiness. . . .

And he,  
Watching her, thought of home too. When he stepped  
With her across the threshold first, and slept  
That first night in her arms so quietly,  
For the first time in all his life he'd known  
All that home meant—or nearly all, for yet  
Each night brought him new knowledge as she met  
Him, smiling on the clean white threshold stone  
When he returned from labor in the Yard . . .  
And she'd be waiting for him soon, while he  
Was fighting with his fellow oversea—  
She would be waiting for him. . . .

It was hard  
For him that he must go, as go he must,  
But harder far for her: things always fell  
Harder upon the women. It was well  
She didn't dream yet . . . He could only trust  
She too would feel that he had got to go,  
Then 'twould not be so hard to go, and yet . . .  
Dreaming, he saw the lamplit table, set  
With silver pot and cups and plates aglow  
For tea in their own kitchen bright and snug,  
With her behind the tea-pot—saw it all,

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The colored calendars upon the wall,  
The bright fire-irons, and the gay hearth-rug  
She'd made herself from bright-hued rags; his place  
Awaiting him, with something hot-and-hot—  
His favorite sausages as like as not,  
Between two plates for him—as, with clean face  
Glowing from washing in the scullery,  
And such a hunger on him, he would sink  
Content into his chair. . . .

'Twas strange to think  
All this was over, and so suddenly—  
'Twas strange, and hard. . . .

Still gazing on the stream,  
Her thoughts too were at home. She heard the patter  
Of tiny feet beside her, and the chatter  
Of little tongues. . . .

Then loudly through their dream  
The buzzer boomed; and all about them rose  
The men and women: soon the wives were on  
The ferry-boat, now puffing to be gone;  
The husbands hurrying, ere the gates should close,  
Back to the Yard. . . .

She, in her dream of gold,  
And he, in his new desolation, stood.  
Then soberly, as wife and husband should,  
They parted with their news as yet untold.

*Wilfrid Wilson Gibson*

## A LETTER OF FAREWELL

Mother, little mother,  
They will tell you,  
After they have shot me at sunrise,  
I died a coward.  
It is not true, little mother—  
You will believe me.

You know how we marched away—  
Banners—bright bayonets—the Marseillaise.  
I shut up the old *chansons*—  
Ah, my *diplome*!—  
France needed her sons for war.  
We waited, aching for the hour.  
At last it came—  
I had my turn in the trenches.

I won't tell you all—  
What it meant to learn the new trade.  
A scholar, was I?—and young?  
Youth died in me.  
And all the old epics, the beautiful songs long silent—  
Ah, that was another life.  
At first it sickened me—  
The torn flesh bleeding, the horrible bodies long dead,  
The ruined towns sprawling like toothless hags,  
The mud, the lice, the stench,

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The stupefying noise—  
A crashing of damned worlds;  
And then the command to kill—  
At first the loathing was a vomit in my heart.

Then something rose in me  
From the abyss.  
Life, the great cannibal,  
Killing and feeding on death—  
I was his workman through ten million years.  
I ran to the slaughter singing.  
I killed with a shout.  
The red rage sucked me up  
In its whirlwind,  
Dashed me on dancing feet  
Against the enemy,  
The enemy everlasting.  
And my life, tossed on bayonets,  
Blown against guns—  
Staked, like a last piece of gold, on the hundredth chance—  
Always my life came back to me unscathed.

Was it man to man—  
The haughty beauty of war?  
I grew numb at last,  
I felt no more.  
I slipped off man's pride like a garment,  
A rotten rag—  
It was brute to brute in a wallow of blood and filth.

## *A Letter of Farewell*

And so, in that last charge on Thiaumont—  
Little shattered city  
Lost and won, won and lost  
Day after day  
In the interminable battle—  
In that hot rush I killed three Boches,  
Stuck them like squeaking pigs.  
The soft flesh sputtering,  
The nick of the steel at bones—  
I felt them no more than the crunch of an insect under my  
    foot  
In the old days.  
Then I fell, worn out,  
Under a wall.  
Hungry, thirsty, listless—  
My gun dropped from my hand.  
I could not rise;  
Perhaps my eyes closed. . . .

When life came back a big Boche was standing over me—  
He had my gun, but his face was kind.  
“I thought you were dead,” he said, and stood looking at me.  
Then he unscrewed his canteen—  
“Drink,” he said, “poor little one—  
I won’t kill you.”

I sprang up, as tall as he, and took his hand,  
Babbling, “It’s foolish business—why should we?”

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I'm through with it."  
And a great strength rose in me,  
And a white light filled me;  
Waves of unbearable love washed over me,  
And I knew I could fight no more.

The charge had rolled on—  
I slipped away,  
Crying, "It is over—over forever—men shall kill no more."  
I shouted the news,  
I summoned the soldiers.  
The tongues of fire came down upon me—  
"Let the guns rot," I said,  
And the cannon rust—  
Look in your brother's eyes  
And clasp his hand."

So they took me and tried me,  
And I must die.  
But for telling the truth—  
Not for what they say.  
It will surely be, little mother.  
The sin that was little at first  
In the savage forest  
When men fought with clubs,  
The sin we have gorged and glutted  
With gases and bombs,  
And machine-guns,

## *A Letter of Farewell*

And battle-ships of sea and air—  
It has grown heavy and monstrous,  
It will be cast off like the plague.  
There will be a new nation—  
No one shall stop us from loving each other.

So goodbye, little mother.  
I don't mind dying for it—  
That nation.  
I see it.

*Harriet Monroe*

## SEEDTIME

Not too deep we plant the grain,  
So that it can rise again  
To re-green the naked field,  
Minting all its golden yield.

But these war-killed men should sleep  
Planted deep, planted deep.  
They have had their share of pain,  
And they would not rise again.

*Clement Wood*

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SUPREME LAUGHTER

Men laugh  
When boys stand in the street  
And fight because each fears the other—  
For no other reason.

Men—millions—  
Stand in the gutter of the world  
And fight—

If God has a sense of humor—

THE ULTIMATE

There are people here,  
But it is lonely.  
I should like to do so many things  
And be so many things—

I am tired.  
I would give all things  
If I could hear your voice say,  
“My son—”

*Travis Hoke*



## THE PLOUGHMAN

Under the long fell's stony eaves  
The ploughman, going up and down,  
Ridge after ridge man's tide-mark leaves,  
And turn the hard gray soil to brown.

Striding, he measures out the earth  
In lines of life, to rain and sun;  
And every year that comes to birth  
Sees him still striding on and on.

The seasons change, and then return;  
Yet still, in blind unsparing ways,  
However I may shrink or yearn,  
The ploughman measures out my days.

His acre brought forth roots last year;  
This year it bears the gleamy grain;  
Next spring shall seedling grass appear:  
Then roots and corn and grass again.

Five times the young corn's pallid green  
I have seen spread and change and thrill;  
Five times the reapers I have seen  
Go creeping up the far-off hill:

And, as the unknowing ploughman climbs  
Slowly and inveterately,  
I wonder long how many times  
The corn will spring again for me.

*Gordon Bottomley*

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### POEMS

#### MY LADY SURRENDERS

How did She abdicate?  
Was it with soft sighs,  
And pretty feignings of a lover's state?  
Or was it solemn-wise,  
With altar offerings and rapt vows?  
Oh, no!—when Love himself was there  
Most housewifely she bound her hair,  
And was off across the fields to milk the cows.

#### THE SILENCE

When I meet you, I greet you with a stare,  
Like a poor shy child at a fair.  
I will not let you love me—yet am I weak,  
I love you so intensely that I cannot speak.  
When you are gone I stand apart,  
And whisper to your image in my heart.

#### SENTIMENTS

Windswept from where they grew,  
These tender flowers lie dead.  
How many things were true  
Had they been left unsaid!

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*Completion*

COMPLETION

The man is made as a machine,  
He is as efficient as a new gun,  
And in his light is the full spectrum seen—  
He is my God, my lover, and my son.

AFTER ANNUNCIATION

Rest, little guest,  
Beneath my breast.  
Feed, sweet seed,  
At your need.  
I took Love for my lord  
And this is my reward—  
My body is good earth,  
That you, dear plant, have birth.

*Anna Wickham*

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### A MAN

Often, when I would sit, a dreamy, straight-haired child,  
A book held gaping on my knee,  
Watering a sterile romance with my thoughts,  
You would come bounding to the curb  
And startle me to life.  
You sat so straight upon your vibrant horse—  
That lovely horse, all silken fire and angry grace—  
And yet you seemed so merged in him,  
So like! At least my thoughts  
Gave you a measure of that wildness.  
And oh, for many years you seemed to me  
Something to marvel at and yet to fear.

But now I know that you resemble most  
That growth in nature that you most revere.  
You are so like, so very like, a tree—  
Grown straight and strong and beautiful,  
With many leaves.  
The years but add in richness to your boughs,  
You make a noble pattern on the sky.  
About your rugged trunk  
Vines creep and lichens cling,  
And children play at tag.  
Upon your branches some will hang their load  
And rest and cool while you must brave the sun.  
But you put forth new life with every year,

*A Man*

And tower nearer to the clouds  
And never bend or grow awry.

I wonder what sweet water bathes your roots,  
And if you gain your substance from the earth;  
Or if you have a treaty with the sun,  
Or keep some ancient promise with the heavens.

RAIN

I have always hated the rain,  
And the gloom of grayed skies.  
But now I think I must always cherish  
Rain-hung leaf and the misty river;  
And the friendly screen of dripping green  
Where eager kisses were shyly given,  
And your pipe-smoke made clouds in our damp, close heaven.

The curious laggard passed us by,  
His wet shoes souged on the shining walk.  
And that afternoon was filled with a blurred glory—  
That afternoon, when we first talked as lovers.

*Jean Starr Untermeyer*

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ANACREONTIC

Do ye mock me, wantons, that I come among ye  
Drunken, bedecked with garlands,  
Like a white, sacrificial bull?  
Laugh, then!  
So Cypris, laughing, shake one petal down  
From her rose-braided hair!  
Honeyed with kisses, be profuse  
The glowing purple that brims up this gold!  
Laugh then, and mock, but kiss me: for what man  
Would come among ye sober?  
Wise, I come,  
Borne on Silenus' ass to praise Eros.

*Frederic Manning*

## TO A MOUNTAIN PINE

O lonely pine  
Upon your granite cliff,  
I know your pain—  
Tossing your weird arms  
To the mighty winds,  
Beating your ragged breast  
With shrunken hands.  
I know your pain,  
For I have stood  
On such high, dawn-kissed peaks,  
And flung my arms  
And beat with futile hands,  
Because I still was held  
To stone and clod  
By sullen roots  
Of unremembered lives.

*Anna Spencer Twitchell*

## POETRY: *A Magazine of Verse*

### SURVIVORS

On a sea island's green and swaying world  
Satiric Time heaps treasures, and the shore  
Far to the waves echoes an old dismay;  
For heavy along it certain moths lie curled:  
Weapons and mouths they have, but little more;  
And whosoever sees them, looks away.

Yet once that race envied the sky with tears;  
And their mornings and their evenings grew  
Until the mightiest flashed in wings of light,  
Ravished with blood up from the creeping years  
To beat against the floor of heaven and through,  
And pour down daysprings gloriously bright,

Mad butterflies: that hour a wind prepared  
Emptied the air of all, and they were drowned,  
And the sea moaned that washed their holy wings.  
But these the wingless, these who never dared,  
Went warm and safe and fat upon the ground;  
And later, in due season, put forth stings.

*Ridgely Torrence*



## TOWARD CHILDHOOD

Backward, O Time, and for a single hour  
Make a small child of him who stands before us  
At the advanced age of seventy-five—  
Leander M. Coggsell, multimillionaire.

In days when gross wealth drugs the very atmosphere,  
It would be vain to guard these present lines from its insidious approach.  
Shall I seem to overdo  
If I give Mr. C. one hundred millions?  
Very well; they're his.

He lives today in semi-retirement,  
And has forgotten partly how the money came;  
Completely so, if asked officially.  
Others have now bent their backs to the great burden;  
He no longer keeps tab, he tells us, on the workings of the vast machine.

He buys now and then a picture, a coronet, a castle;  
He smiles impartially on the great and on the small,  
On the heedless and on the inquisitive,  
Reads detective stories,  
And plays croquet.

Now let us make him a little younger.  
We strip him first of his bland leisure

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And of his more puerile interests.  
Five years ago—yes, even less—  
He was aflame to found, to furnish, to fill  
His great museum,  
He the modern Medici—Cosimo and Lorenzo in one.  
Books, manuscripts, madonnas, choked his days;  
Art and learning walked captive at his heels.

But Cæsar never grew so great, you say,  
Upon such meat as that?  
Of course not. There was a previous period;  
A phantasmagoric jumble of varied interests  
Filled the public air; all was kept aloft  
By superhuman skill, and all was juggled /  
Just a bit too swiftly for the questioning eye to follow—  
Even for the interested orb  
Of the Uncle of us all:  
Banks, foundries, railways, tanks, stock market, state leg-  
islatures, what you will;  
Everything brought about with suave and Mephistophelean  
mien  
By the great thaumaturge,  
While deft assistants at the lesser tables  
Passed on the properties and dressed the scene.

Peeling away still further from our friend  
His years, dexterity and grandeur,  
We find him on a lower stage,

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## *Toward Childhood*

Before a poorer audience,  
Doing less skilfully and on a smaller scale  
The tricks that made the man—himself.  
It seems, viewed retrospectively, a mere rehearsal  
Of his immense Performance.  
Here, industrious, thrifty and alert  
(To give his qualities their better names),  
He practiced, in semi-privacy and with no possibility of  
praise,  
The qualities he lauded, later,  
In pamphlets and addresses aimed at the nation's youth.

Back still farther:  
No company now; no firm;  
Just a lone young individual,  
Of parentage blent and non-distinguished, let us say,  
With a young helpmate of his own kind;  
Both struggling together for a foothold,  
Both putting forth their strained endeavors  
To feed and clothe a little flock,  
And to "get on."

Next go his wife and children.  
We have left now only a young clerk or handy-man,  
Of lingo semi-rustic, semi-foreign, semi-citified, quite as you  
like;  
Moling away beneath the surface,  
Yet coming up, at intervals,

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To see the Main Chance shining in the sky;  
Holding his own, and more, against all youthful rivals,  
And shaping vigorously the grand ideals  
Which, later, were to fire his heart—and ours.

Next we deprive him of his office-stool,  
Or of his chance to labor hardily out in the sheds.  
He's but a boy at school—  
Quick, quick, with slate and pencil;  
Sharp, sharp, among the playground's crowd.

Next knee-trousers go.  
We have a child of four in laughable habiliments  
Preserved by some uncouth disciple of Daguerre,  
And later shown, in half-tones,  
For the derisive adoration of the world;  
But with a look, sly and determined, in the eyes,  
Which promises much.

Now but an infant-in-arms,  
Borne in long convoluted skirts.  
"Oh, what a forehead!" cries a visiting aunt,  
Pushing the frilled cap back.  
And, kissing such brows, mothers have often said with awe,  
"He may be president."

Lastly, a new-born babe,  
Hugged close within a home

## *Toward Childhood*

On some elm-shaded street,  
Or in some slattern village farther west,  
Or in some stony cabin far beyond our bounds.

Can we go on?

Yes, with Wordsworth, who has Intimations,  
And who may have bestowed on him  
Long streamers of supernal—or infernal—glory;  
Or with Kant, who has Innate Ideas,  
And who may well have packed the baby full  
Of pre-accumulated notions and experiences;  
Or with Galton, who cracks up Heredity,  
And who may have presented a complete outfit  
Of traits passed on from linked forefathers;  
Or with Taine, who comes out strongly for Environment,  
And who perhaps decreed our babe should be  
Entirely what Surroundings made him.  
Modern opinion and current fashion  
May favor this last notion still.

Thus our new-born hero came at once  
Within a range of influences and waiting opportunities  
Which caused his Life to follow  
As easily and inevitably  
As a corollary upon a theorem proved—  
As naturally as some prepotent cloud,  
Careering through the littered heavens,  
Helps weave strange, disconcerting patterns on earth's fields.

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H'm! Are we not all clouds together?—  
Minor cirri, dumpy cumuli,  
Multitudinous shreds of vapor,  
Rosy or gray,  
That float or drive about in tiny tatters;  
And some fixed fault within the national sky  
Prevents a proper taming of our thunder-heads.  
We wait, and no high Cloud-Compeller comes  
To help us master our Preponderates.

*Henry B. Fuller*

## EDITORIAL COMMENT

### THE NEW ERA



HE air is full of prophecies these days. Through the war the spirit of man is to be reborn, we are told; the costly red fertilizer, so lavishly poured out, is to enrich the soil of the new era, so that souls will grow to nobler stature than is possible from the dry and weedy sod of peace. Materialism and individualism are to be swept away, and society is to unite for the common good, is to organize and function with complete precision and with elimination of waste, so that the rate of its progress will be to the past as a racing automobile is to the mail-coach of our fathers or the ox-cart of our grandfathers.

The arts are to share in this rebirth, we are led to hope. A new purpose will consecrate our poets, painters, musicians, architects; a new glamour will glorify their dreams. They will be caught up by the vast world-encompassing current, and carried along with irresistible force toward a goal of unimaginable splendor. The human race thus far has groped in the dark—divided, confined, chained. Now it is just awaking, rising, casting off its shackles. Freed by this war, all but federated by its sacrificial agonies, men and nations are just about to begin their militant march toward the common goal of a universal state organized for joy and beauty through mutual service and universal brotherhood.

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It may be that we should hear some such music as that in the New-Year chimes. For the men in the trenches, for the maimed, the dying, the bereaved, it is perhaps the only adequate consolation—this hope that out of their blood-drenched earth will spring a more glorious world. But one can not help wondering whether the prophets are not led by the modern speed mania to apply to things of the spirit material laws.

What will be the effect—will it be creative or destructive—of all this vast energizing of the race, upon those men and women of genius who must, in the future as the past, be its leaders? Humanity can not move faster or further than its greatest souls: will the great souls of the new era have a chance to develop to full power through a childhood and youth geared up to the highest tension strain? and will they find room for free and adequate action of brain and muscle in the pushing, surging, driven world of the new ideal, designed to ignore, and so obliterate, all power which it can not immediately use? And how will the artists of the future live through the universal roar and rush, and find the quiet place and hour to dream in and grow wise?

Much brooding on these questions seemed to take form and substance at the first Chicago production of *Intolerance*, D. W. Griffith's prodigious new movie which Vachel Lindsay—a movie fan who has written a book on the new art—calls the most wonderful and idealistic and mystical of all

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## *The New Era*

photo-dramas, the climax of cinema achievement. What was it to me, who, not being a movie fan, brought a fresh mind to the contemplation of this climactic, amazing phenomenon?

What was it?—it was a *reductio ad absurdum* of the speed-mania; it was an insanely de-vitalizing and de-energizing spectacle which jumbled up, in one indigestible mixture, the fall of Babylon, a modern execution, the Crucifixion and the massacre of St. Bartholomew. It ran these four "parallel stories" together at three-second intervals for three hours, making thirty-six hundred jerks from one story to another, thirty-six hundred leaps for each agitated human brain. The process was so athletic for at least one of the audience that the three crosses, the imposing Babylonian walls, Catherine de Medici, and the modern trains and motors (these last on a mad chase to save the virtuous hero from the scaffold) were all plunging together down into the abyss, not only that evening but for two three nights thereafter in the form of nightmare.

Is this the art of the future? Will there be any consecutiveness, any coherence, in the life which it expresses? any creative power in the minds which it spirals like a whirlwind? Will the new era be an age of perpetual motion, with the cinema—audaciously, sublimely efficient—reeling off art and literature?

In that case what will become of poetry—and POETRY? It is with some perturbation of spirit that we salute the new age, and wish our readers a Happy New Year.

H. M.

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### APPRECIATION

One of the privileges of working in a center of poetic influence like POETRY is that we are constantly made aware of the ever growing and deepening love of beauty that is stirring in the American people. Through a hundred incidents, great and small, it comes to us daily. There are times when beauty, in this case the specific beauty of the written word, seems almost visibly present with us, and we can feel it spreading its slender leaves in the sun and striking strong white roots deep into the lives of the people.

This feeling has been wakened in us of late by a movement which is springing up all over the country, a movement whose results can hardly be estimated, but which may well be a harbinger of the true golden age of American poetry.

This movement goes back to the fountain head, to the schools where the new generation is being formed. Children are being taught more and more that poetry is something to be loved unquestioningly, not something to be dissected, pulled to pieces and hated. And one of the means by which this is accomplished is the giving of time in school to the writing of verse by the children. They are given pencil, paper, and the assurance that they will not be laughed at—something which all too often has not been given in the past—and no further restrictions. If the result is seldom, perhaps we should say never, really poetry, the after effects in love and appreciation of the art are incalculable. Whatever we have ourselves tried to do, even unsuccessfully, is ever after a source of keen pleasure, and the creation of an

## *Appreciation*

audience, such as these children will be in a few years, may well call forth the great American poet whose wings have not yet lifted.

From all over the country indications come to us of this movement. From the High School of Pasadena has come a little printed volume of the work of the boys and girls, compiled by Miss Isabel Frazee. From a little town in the south-eastern Cumberlands in Kentucky, twenty-odd miles from a railroad, a town called Hindman, has come an account by Miss Berenice K. van Slyke of similar work in her English classes, which has produced unusually good results from these isolated, and so unsophisticated, children. At least two schools in Chicago, the Francis Parker and the Chicago Latin Schools, are doing similar work with their youngsters, and there are of course many more of whom no word has reached us.

Another movement which represents a different phase of the question, but which is also sure to have wide-spread results, is the recent appointment by the General Federation of Women's Clubs, a federation which includes among its members over three million women, of a new committee on poetry. Mrs. Martha Foote Crow is chairman of this committee, which is planning a nation-wide campaign for study and appreciation of poetry among the women.

The potentiality of the American people, both in the creation of poetry and in appreciation of the art, is only now beginning to be realized, and we who were among the pioneers are feeling the great joy of seeing our work advance among the people at large.

*E. T.*

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### POETRY AND ORATORY

The difference between poetry and oratory is, shortly, this: The poet aims at using language in an intense way and intensity is his product, while the orator aims at using language in an exalted way and exaltation is his product. Of course there is exaltation in poetry, and there is intensity in oratory; but the poet is not seeking for exaltation and the orator is not seeking for intensity. The use of language in an exalted way, however, is always associated with the office of the poet, and so it is easy to make oratory appear as poetry—it is especially easy to make it appear as poetry when the orators deliver their addresses in verse. Pope and Byron lived in an age of great orators, and what they wrote in verse is amongst the great orations of their time:

Lo, the poor Indian whose untutored mind  
Sees God in clouds or hears him in the wind.

That is the opening of a great oration. And in Byron's long poems we get the very gestures of the orator:

Stop! for thy tread is on an Empire's dust—  
An earthquake's spoil is sepulchred below.  
Is the spot marked by no heroic bust,  
Nor column trophied for triumphal show?

"Oratory is the thing heard, poetry is the thing overheard"—this aphorism suggests, better than a whole chapter of analysis, the difference between poetry and oratory. Oratory deals with public things; poetry deals with the secret things in the life of man. Poetry, to make use of a phrase of Turgenev's, is "the innuendo by which the soul makes known its enormous claim." Oratory asserts the less

enormous claim for country or for friends. We are made to feel that the poem could exist without an auditor, but we know that the oration, whether in prose or verse, could not exist without the audience.

Here is part of an oration from a volume I have been reading, *Irish Oratory*. The speaker, John Philpot Curran, is defending a man against whom the government has brought informers for witnesses. Curran speaks of the informer as "the wretch that is buried a man, lies till his heart has time to fester, and is then dug up a witness"; and then goes on:

Have you not seen him, after his resurrection from that tomb, after having been dug out of the region of death and corruption, make his appearance upon the table, the living image of life and death, and the supreme arbiter of both? Have you not marked when he entered, how the stormy wave of the multitude retired at his approach? Have you not marked how the human heart bowed to the supremacy of his power, in the undissembled homage of deferential horror? How his glance, like the lightning of heaven, seemed to rive the body of the accused, while his voice warned the devoted wretch of woe and death—a death which no innocence can escape, no force resist, no antidote prevent.

After reading this fine passage of oratory, I think of Curran's single poem, *The Deserter's Meditation*—the poem which suggested to Byron the Gaelic measure that he used in one of his best lyrics:

If sadly thinking, with spirits sinking,  
Could more than drinking my cares compose;  
A cure for sorrow from thought I'd borrow,  
In hopes to-morrow would end my woes.  
But as in wailing there's nought availing,  
And Death unfailing will strike the blow;  
Then for that reason, and for a season,  
Let us be merry before we go.

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To joy a stranger, a wayworn ranger,  
In every danger my course I've run;  
Now joys all ending, and Death befriending,  
His last aid lending, my life is done.  
No more a rover nor hapless lover,  
My days are over, my glass runs low:  
Then for that reason, and for a season,  
Let us be merry before we go.

In this song there is no audience in view and no exaltation is sought. The poem has intensity, and through the lines comes something of the secret of a life.

*Padraic Colum*

## REVIEWS

### FROST AND MASTERS

*Mountain Interval*, by Robert Frost. Henry Holt & Co.  
*The Great Valley*, by Edgar Lee Masters. Macmillan Co.

In Kipling's story of primitive men the bard becomes a thing of awe because he can "tell the tale of the tribe," can save the tribe from engulfing oblivion by "making words run up and down in men's hearts"—words that move too grandly to be forgotten. In the final accounting perhaps this is the first function of the bard, even more his office than the setting of dreams to magic measures.

These two poets, Frost and Masters, are telling the tale of the tribe, the varying tales of their separate tribes; and the simultaneous appearance of their latest books tempts one to comparison and contrast. Reading the two books as a whole, without stopping for details, one gets an overpowering impression, not only of two different individuals

## *Frost and Masters*

but of two different crowds. In Frost Puritan New England speaks with a voice as absolute as New Hampshire's granite hills. Whittier wandered there once, singing a few songs, and Emerson from those slopes looked inward and outward for truth. But neither of these felt New England as Frost feels it.

In the same way Masters tells the tale of his tribe. We have had—we have now—other poets of the Middle West. Whitman of course included this vast pioneer-peopled plain in his sublimated vision of These States as a cosmic democracy. Riley and Eugene Field—both town-lovers hardly aware of Mother Earth—delighted in, and to a certain extent individualized, the traditional rural types of this region, types handed down from Mark Twain, Bill Nye and other great humorists. Vachel Lindsay loves the Middle West like a big brother, pleads with it, sings of and to it, glorifies it with troubadour poems, making it picturesque, weaving a glamour around it. And Carl Sandburg loves Chicago and its sea-hearted lake, knows it intimately, as a cosmopolis. But perhaps none of these has got this particular region into his blood and bones so deeply as Mr. Masters, who was "raised" in one of its typical villages and who lives in its typical great city.

"Yankees are what they always were," sings Mr. Frost. His New England is the same old New England of the pilgrim fathers—a harsh, austere, velvet-coated-granite earth, bringing forth rigid, narrow, heroic men and women, hard but with unexpected softnesses. Their religion has been

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modified since Cotton Mather, but not their character, at least not the character of those who stay on their farms, resisting the call of the West and the lure of towns. To present this earth, these people, the poet employs usually a blank verse as massive as they, as stripped of all apologies and adornments. His poetry is sparing, austere, even a bit crabbed at times; but now and then it lights up with a sudden and intimate beauty, a beauty springing from life-long love and intuition, as in these images of trees from two different poems:

A resurrected tree,  
A tree that had been down and raised again,  
A barkless spectre—he had halted too,  
As if for fear of treading upon me.  
.....

She had no saying dark enough  
For the dark pine that kept  
Forever trying the window-latch  
Of the room where they slept.

Nature is always thus an integral part of Mr. Frost's human dramas—not a mere background but one of the cast. It is wonderful how he builds up the terrific winter tempest in *Snow*, for example, and does it, not by mere statement, but through the talk of those delicately contrasted characters, the dry skeptical wife, the slower matter-of-fact husband, and the deep-breathing, deep-dreaming evangelist, lover of life and the storm. And "a springtime passion for the earth," with human life—yes, and brute life—as a part of it, burns in such poems as *In the Home Stretch*, *Putting in the Seed*, *Birches*, and *The Cow in Apple Time*.



## *Frost and Masters*

It is appropriate, no doubt, that Masters should be less selective than Frost—the West is less reserved than New England. Against Frost's one hundred pages we have nearly three hundred from Masters, and *The Great Valley* is his second book of this year. The watchful critic must regret much of it; especially he must wonder, to the extreme of amazement, why the poet should have reverted to *Marsyas* and *Apollo at Pherae*, which are in the mood of those early books whose academic unexpressiveness will always be one of the curiosities of literature. But one must take a poet as he is, and this poet has to pour out whatever is in his heart, and leave his readers, or Father Time, to do the sifting. He has to do this, moreover in a spirit of careless abundance which throws off magic lines in a mass of coarser texture—flowers, grasses and weeds together under a brilliant and generous procreative sun.

But this is the prairie's exuberant way—one must look at this poet, not in close detail, but in the mass. Thus one may get from him, as from the prairies themselves, a sense of space and richness. One feels in him too the idealistic vision of a man accustomed to far horizons—that impatience with things near, things more or less faithless to the imminent beauty, and that relief in the contemplation of things remote, beauty's survivals or prophecies.

This chaotic half-baked civilization, growing up out of these broad and fruitful plains into dull little towns and mad great cities, all fitfully, inadequately spiritualized—this one feels in Mr. Masters' books. One feels also a deep

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and tragic love of it, a thwarted but rooted faith in it, which cannot be destroyed by all the messy materialism, the soul-wasting "efficiency," which he sees around him. His "great valley" is dominated by the gigantic sombre figure of Lincoln, the Autochthon of his dream—Lincoln, who ever renews his power in the imagination of the people, growing greater, like the elder Titans, through the mists of time.

How much of all this Mr. Masters presents with adequate poetic magic no critic can define as yet. We, his neighbors and contemporaries, find—most of us—the very essence of it in *Spoon River*, which will surely tell something of the tale of our tribe to those who come after us. We find something of its atmosphere also, its light and shade and space, in the longer monologues of the later books, though here the theme is more consciously and as a rule less creatively presented. But in all one is carried along by a wave of power—the cumulative effect, like a geometrical progression, seems out of proportion to the separate steps that make it. This is the reader's tribute, no doubt, to the poet's rich and generous personality—that of a deeply informed man of the modern world, something between Chaucer and Rabelais, but burning darkly in his heart a little secret candle to some mediaeval saint.

One can not leave Mr. Masters without protesting against the new edition of *Spoon River*, now unfortunately the only one on sale. The so-called "illustrations" by Oliver Herford are pitiful beyond words. So embellished, the book looks like the typical ornamental volume on Reuben's parlor table.

To return to our parallel—it is important that two rich districts of this country, each an individual and powerful personality, are finding modern interpreters. Who will speak as well for the South, and for the Far West between sea and mountains? H. M.

A DECORATIVE COLORIST

*Men, Women and Ghosts*, by Amy Lowell. Macmillan Co.

In this book the dramatic monologues in the section called *The Overgrown Pasture* are perhaps the most keenly alive of the stories in various forms which compose it. Their free-verse presentation of the harsh Yankee dialect, and of the hard, stript Yankee character, is poetry as crabbéd as a barbed-wire fence, but it attains at times a certain tragic dignity by expressing with fit harshness the psychology of lonely New England rural women hurt to the point of madness or violence by solitude, silence, lack of sympathy and love. It is a generation gone to seed which she gives us here, an "overgrown pasture" which the hardy souls have deserted, and in which only ghosts, thwarted and wistful of life, remain.

The rest of the book might be called *Decorations*, for it is essentially a series—or, rather, several series—of decorative paintings. As becomes an artist in that kind, Miss Lowell has a really vital sense of color; and she keeps her planes intact, and holds her vivid tones to the key and the pattern. The only trouble is, she is tempted to become too much involved with her decorative scheme. Her form, whether it be rhythm royal or polyphonic prose, is in danger

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of becoming too formal, holding not only the characters of the story, but the poet herself, in too tight a mesh. In the *Figurines in Old Saxe* this may be sufficient for her purpose—a close eighteenth-century mesh, with gesticulated lovers moving back and forth to a delicately shadowed fate. Yet that purpose is not quite enough to give a living soul to the work of her hand. In *Pickthorn Manor* and *The Cremona Violin* one can scarcely observe the clever psychology, analyzing women's involuntary infidelities, because of a certain overneatness in the design; and it is a great relief when the heroine of *Patterns* cuts the mesh with the sword of tragedy, and lifts the poem to a higher plane with her poignant cry, "What are patterns for!" *Patterns* is, indeed, not only the most effective of the *Figurines* in decorative quality, but the most human and convincing as well. And one cannot leave this group without a word of praise for the old-Venice atmosphere, like tarnished gold, in *The City of Falling Leaves*.

Similarly the *War Pictures*—such pieces in polyphonic prose as *Bombardment* and *Lead Soldiers*—are too consciously designed; one cannot forget the pattern, and it has not enough spontaneity and violence for the subject. It is only when the pattern exactly fits the theme that we get such an admirable dramatic *suite* as *Malmaison*—if one may borrow a musical term for this kind of choric movement, or such an adorable grotesque as *Red Slippers*. These are both in polyphonic prose, a pattern which hardly lacks intricacy, but which in these cases does not obtrude itself.

### *A Decorative Colorist*

The book ends with a group of grotesques, a mood in which Miss Lowell delights as deeply as any Chinese wood-carver. They range from the delicate attitudinizing of *The Dinner-party* to the fiercely jerky gesticulation of the Stravinsky imitations. The art in these is very deliberate, no doubt, but that is the way with the grotesque, always a deliberate, mocking exaggeration.

It is a relief to find a poet who is always an artist. Miss Lowell may have too much art at times, but that is much rarer than too little.

H. M.

### CELTIC SONGS

*Singing Fires of Erin*, by Eleanor Rogers Cox. John Lane Co.

*Songs of the Fields*, by Francis Ledwidge. Duffield & Co.

Into a mold of conventional verse Miss Cox has turned moments from ancient stories of Ireland. Her lines are trimmed with a sprinkling of Celtic images, and a handful of immortal names—Deirdre, Aengus, Cuchulain, Emer and others. But the statement that Miss Cox follows in the footsteps of Yeats is misleading. Distinctly she bears no relation to him, not even the doubtful one of imitator.

Francis Ledwidge, on the other hand, in *Songs of the Fields*, is truer to his heritage of Irish poetry. A sense of beautiful language and a deep sense of fields and woods and waters meet in his poems. Lord Dunsany, who introduces him, explains that he found him, where he has long looked for a poet, among the Irish peasants. The only pity is that

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Mr. Ledwidge has not looked much for himself there, but instead has too often sought expression in borrowed language. Especially his poems of Irish heroes draw from the magic of Yeats. Yet, in a sense to justify them, they have beauty of their own too:

The gray sea-fogs above them are unfurled  
At evening when the sea walks with the moon.

And later in the same poem, *The Death of Laeg*:

Sleep lays his heavy thumbs upon my eyes,  
Shuts out all sounds and shakes me at the wrists.

For the rest this poet, who for a living was in turn farm laborer, miner and scavenger on the roads, seems to have been seduced by the bright idiom of Keats, and of the Elizabethans perhaps. Though he wears this garment of another day with a poet's instinct, it cannot help giving too much of his verse that unessential air of costumed quaintness. Possibly he himself would find it hard to say just why he has used words and phrases like *'tis*, *'neath*, *'thwart*, *dost*, *nought*, *the while*, *I thought to*.

Mr. Ledwidge is now lance corporal in an Irish regiment of the Mediterranean force, in the face of which fact criticism seems cold. One hopes, however, for other poems from him, more native, more intrinsic in character, that the inherent music of his verse may gain edge and savor. Already verses here and there make a sudden image, the way these lines do from *A Twilight in March*:

A gipsy lit a fire, and made a sound  
Of moving tins, and from an oblong moon  
The river seemed to gush across the ground . . .

## Celtic Songs

And then three syllables of melody  
Dropped from a blackbird's flute, and died apart.

Sometimes his words have the amber quality of honey,  
and with all their indirectness seem to distil, almost as in a  
Greek idyl, the sweetness of the earth :

And I will meet her on the hills of South,  
And I will lead her to a northern water—  
My wild one, the sweet beautiful uncouth,  
The eldest maiden of the Winter's daughter.

And now and then one comes on lines with no lack of  
directness, like these from two different poems :

The brown  
Nude beauty of the autumn sweetly bent  
Over the woods across the little town.

Where I shall rest when my last song is over  
The air is smelling like a feast of wine.

Dorothy Dudley

## OUR CONTEMPORARIES

### SIR ORACLE

Mr. William Stanley Braithwaite has delivered once more  
his annual pronunciamento in the *Boston Transcript*. We  
note with due humility his statement that "the influence of  
POETRY has waned."

If POETRY's influence has "waned," we may still rejoice  
that it seems to retain full power over Mr. Braithwaite him-  
self: for in his list of the year's "poems of distinction" he  
mentions sixty-five from POETRY, against thirty-five from  
*Others*, and thirty-three from the *Century*, the two maga-

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zines next in favor; also a POETRY poem, *Night for Adventures*, by Victor Starbuck, is one of the four spread out for special honor on the valuable *Transcript* page.

Moreover, this is the first time the Boston dictator, in these annual reviews, has even mentioned POETRY or its influence. We should be duly grateful that he has finally discovered us, though—alas!—with polite deprecation, as “the organ of Ezra Pound’s radicalism,” and with the long-delayed admission, not yet intended as a compliment, that “the point of departure from conservatism”—he should have included his own conservatism—“may be dated from the establishment of POETRY, A MAGAZINE OF VERSE.”

Mr. Braithwaite’s tardy and reluctant recognition of our “influence” is perfectly comprehensible. POETRY has from the first taken exception to his autocratic tone and criticized his somewhat provincial opinions. Opinions are always individual, of course; but when they are solemnly enunciated with the aid of lists (starred and unstarred for greater or less “distinction”) in a newspaper of long-established literary reputation like the *Transcript*, they assume an authority quite out of proportion to their value, and therefore demand scrutiny.

Last year Mr. Braithwaite was almost a convert to “radicalism.” This year his mind is at sea, wondering whether it should venture further out into the unknown, but on the whole steering shorewards, reverting to type. He decides that although “the influence of the innovators has been felt,” so that “strength, independence and more daring execution have resulted from contact with the new forces,” yet now,



"with the elimination of a great deal that sounded false, and which was very much in evidence a year ago, American poetry looks good to progress with fewer distractions." Et cetera, in a valiant effort to face gracefully in both directions.

A mind so unsure of its ground necessarily moves freakishly. Thus we remain untroubled by Mr. Braithwaite's libellous assertion that "Mr. Sandburg, a much-heralded POETRY production, was a failure"; or by his inference of failure, in the case of Ezra Pound, from the statement that "the collected poems of Pound have so little interested the American public that they find it difficult to discover an American publisher; and the magazine *Others*, largely supported by his disciples, has ceased publication."

Mr. Sandburg (who, by the way, was the Lord's "production," not POETRY's)—Mr. Sandburg, stimulated by heavy sales and by the good opinion of critics like Francis Hackett, Louis Untermeyer, George Sterling, Floyd Dell, and many others of quality, can easily get along without Mr. Braithwaite's. As for Mr. Pound, we doubt if he is seeking "to discover an American publisher," or if immediate public response is the ultimate criterion of a poet's fame. But both these gentlemen are muscular, intellectually as well as physically, and abundantly able to take care of themselves. The thrust at *Others* is less valiant. No one can fail to regret the cessation of that brave little magazine, which was founded without a cent of capital, and carried on for twelve or more experimental and adventurous months through the devotion and personal sacrifice of its editor. It may be a surprise to both editor and contributors to learn that they are "disciples

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of Ezra Pound," though no doubt many of them are his admirers.

In conclusion, we may be permitted to inquire why Mr. Braithwaite is reprinting, in his forthcoming anthology of the year's magazine verse, eight poems copyrighted by this magazine, without so much as asking permission of its editor, or, in at least one case, of the poet.

H. M.

### THE SEVEN ARTS

*The Seven Arts* is the ambitious title of the new magazine, published in New York, of which James Oppenheim is the editor, Waldo Frank the associate editor, with an advisory board including Kahlil Gibran, Louis Untermeyer, Van Wyck Brooks, Robert Frost, Edna Kenton, David Mannes and Robert Edmund Jones. The ideal magazine is perhaps only another Utopian dream, but none of the many now before us does just what *The Seven Arts* proposes to do—to furnish a vehicle of expression for the artist in any or all of the seven arts, and particularly for "that portion of his work which is done through a joyous necessity of the artist himself." This is a fine project. We will not say that it deserves to succeed, for desert is based not upon propaganda but upon accomplishment, and nothing is so barren as a slogan unfulfilled. But we shall watch the outcome with anxiety and hope.

At first sight one fears that there may be more breadth than depth to the magazine, that the ground to be covered may preclude the possibility of printing contributions of any

## *The Seven Arts*

length. This would be a pity, as the fragmentariness of many of our periodicals makes one's mind feel like a scrap-bag, full of diverse remnants of information, with hardly so much unity as a patch-work quilt. This is but a fear, however.

The outstanding contribution to the first number is perhaps Romain Rolland's *America and The Arts*, although I confess that Allen Upward's fable, *The Saints of San Atoll*, gives me most pleasure. The Frenchman's message seems to me very largely rhetoric. I don't know what M. Rolland means when he says that we are "free of traditions," that we are by this very lack of tradition "isolated from the vast load of thought, of sentiment, of secular obsession, under which the old world groans." If it is possible, as he says, that "the intellectual fixed ideas, the dogmas of politics and art, that grip Europe, are unknown to us," is it not possible that we have our own fixed ideas, our own dogmas and obsessions? And are we not just discovering that we may *not* "go forward, unhampered, to our future while Europe sacrifices hers to quarrels and rancors and ambitions that should be dead?"—that our freedom depends upon Europe's and Europe's upon ours?

And I wish the editors of *The Seven Arts* would explain what they mean when *they* say that "we have no traditions." We have living traditions, summed up in certain representative Americans—statesmen or artists. We have many traditions, in the air, so to speak, waiting for artists to synthesize them. The artist creates "a school of style"; he does not necessarily follow one. To say that we have no traditions is to say that we have had no artists, no writers,

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no poets, no statesmen. It is perhaps due to the very nature of our democracy that our genius has been so largely individual and initiative. Our writers have not run in schools, it may be; but to say that we have no traditions is to deny all that makes the American spirit, which is certainly distinct enough to have a name and to be traditional. It is to deny Lincoln, Lee, Washington, Jefferson, Hawthorne, Poe, Whitman and many others; it is to deny ourselves—the air we breathe and the ground we walk on.

“Do not copy foreign models,” says M. Rolland, an injunction also repeated recently by Theodore Roosevelt, who is suddenly alive to the need of nationalism in art as well as in politics; although in his Sorbonne lectures on good citizenship six or seven years ago he made no mention of the artist’s share in statehood. It is surprising how much the discussion of respective cultures incident upon the war has done to awaken interest in the arts and artists—though not enough to form any national commissions or create any endowment funds, or take the tariff off books.

“Be careless of form,” too, says M. Rolland; but is not mastery of form the road to freedom, and what form of art is foreign once it is assimilated? The surest road to art is through an international understanding of art. Of course M. Rolland means that we should not *slavishly* copy foreign models; but we should not so use any model. Particularly we should not wait, as I pointed out several years ago, to copy our own models after they have been assimilated by France or England or Germany and so returned to us. Indeed what we chiefly need, I think, is to recognize our

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own individuality, our own traditions. Perhaps we do not lack the tradition so much as the power of recognition. No one yet, I believe, has pointed out a certain kinship between Hawthorne's realism and that of the Russian novelists who are now so much admired. And Hawthorne flourished in the despised Victorian era. *A. C. H.*

### THE NEW DIAL

We hope that *The Dial* under its new management may prove not only a "journal of opinion," but a pathfinder. It is the function of an organ of criticism to create opinion, as well as to record it; to project itself into the future as well as to explore the past. If it does not do this, it is of no more value than a card index, useful enough in its way, but not very stimulating. The trouble with *The Dial* under the old management was that it seemed to live too much in the past. It was authoritative on established subjects—the only good poet was a dead one. We are very sure that this will not be the editorial conception of the new *Dial*.

We hope that, in the heat of controversy, we may not have seemed to belittle the achievement of the founder of *The Dial*, the late Francis Fisher Browne, who for many years devoted his fine abilities to the promotion of the higher culture in America. If we have criticized the paper's attitude, it was *The Dial* which commenced the quarrel. We herewith bury the hatchet, and extend our hearty good wishes to the present publisher, Mr. Martyn Johnson.

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### CORRESPONDENCE

#### I

*Dear Editor:* Two slight poems of recent print are worth reappearance in brevier in the back part of POETRY for the benefit of those who missed them at the première. One is by Percy Hammond in the *Chicago Tribune*, and reads:

The entourage of the American Derby was a bit blowzy.  
Weeds, long grass, dust and grime  
                                  and a melancholy prairie landscape.  
A jaz band played *Pretty Baby* and *My Country, 'Tis of Thee*.  
Most of us sat in our shirt sleeves  
                                  and drank beer out of bottles.

The other is titled *The Elephant*, and is by Carmen Cerelli, who is ten years old, going on eleven, and a pupil in a New York grade school where this piece was written in a school competition:

There stands the elephant,  
Bold and strong—  
There he stands chewing his food.  
We are strengthless against his strength.

*Carl Sandburg*

#### II

*Dear POETRY:* I must out with it—my

#### LAMENT OF A POETRY EDITOR:

Heigh-ho, how many songs they write,  
The great ones and the small!  
Although I sit from noon till night  
I cannot read them all.  
They write of most important things,  
Of wisdom old and new.  
But oh, the little words with wings  
They are so few—so few!

*E. T.*

## NOTES

The Helen Haire Levinson Prize of two hundred dollars, and the prize of one hundred dollars offered by another guarantor, will both be continued for our fifth year. Each will be awarded for a poem or group of poems published in *POETRY* from October, 1916, to September, 1917. The prize for a lyric poem will not be continued this year.

The donor of the Levinson Prize requests that no poet shall be considered ineligible because of having previously received it.

Mr. Wilfrid Wilson Gibson, the well-known English poet, has just arrived in this country for a lecture tour under the Pond Lyceum Bureau. His new book of verse, *Livelihood* (Macmillan Co.) will soon appear.

Mr. Frederic Manning, another English poet, is also familiar to our readers. He is now a private in the trenches, and a book of his verse will soon be published in England.

Mr. Gordon Bottomley and Anna Wickham (Mrs. Hepburn), who appear for the first time in *POETRY*, are also English. The former is represented in *Georgian Verse*, which recently printed his play *King Lear's Wife*. Another play is *Laodice and Danae* (Four Seas Co.); and Elkin Mathews has published his two small pamphlets of verse, *Chambers of Imagery*. Anna Wickham's first book of verse, *The Contemplative Quarry*, was published in 1915 by the Poetry Bookshop.

Of the American poets Mr. Ridgely Torrence, of Xenia, Ohio, and New York City, has appeared in *POETRY*. Also Mr. Henry B. Fuller of Chicago, whose free-verse satires will soon be published by the Houghton Mifflin Co. Also Mr. Clement Wood, of New York.

Jean Starr Untermeyer (Mrs. Louis U.) of New York, has contributed verse to various magazines, but has not yet published a volume. Ditto Anna Spencer Twitchell (Mrs. D. S. Person), who is a native of Louisville, Ky., and now resident in Colorado Springs. Mr. Travis Hoke, formerly of Chicago, is a mystery as yet to this editor.

## BOOKS RECEIVED

## ORIGINAL VERSE:

*Sunflowers*, by Willard Wattles. A. C. McClurg & Co., Chicago.  
*Harvest Moon*, by Josephine Preston Peabody. Houghton Mifflin Co.  
*From the Hidden Way*, by James Branch Cabell. Robert M. McBride, New York.

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- Verses*, by Mathilda Junge. The Roxburgh Pub. Co., Boston.  
*Dust of the Stars*, by Danford Barney. John Lane Co.  
*Things as They Are*, by Berton Braley. Geo. H. Doran Co.  
*The Great Valley*, by Edgar Lee Masters. Macmillan Co.  
*Responsibilities*, by William Butler Yeats. Macmillan Co.  
*The Quest*, by John G. Neihardt. Macmillan Co.  
*Spoon River Anthology*, by Edgar Lee Masters. Illustrated by Oliver Herford. Macmillan Co.  
*Fruit Gathering*, by Rabindranath Tagore. Macmillan Co.  
*Stray Birds*, by Rabindranath Tagore. Macmillan Co.  
*The Witchesong*, by Ernst Von Wildenbruch. Privately printed, New York.  
*Spectra*, by Emanuel Morgan and Anne Knish. Mitchell Kennerley.  
*New Belgian Poems*, by Emile Cammaerts; with English translations by Tita Brand-Cammaerts. John Lane Co.  
*Something Singing*, by Margaret Perry. Sherman, French & Co.  
*A Hidden Well*, by Louis How. Sherman, French & Co.  
*Geraint of Devon*, by Marion Lee Reynolds. Sherman, French & Co.  
*Cat's Cradle*, by H. Stanley Haskins. Sherman, French & Co.  
*Neighbors of Yesterday*, by Jeanne Robert Foster. Sherman, French & Co.  
*The Vanished World*, by Douglas Duer. Sherman, French & Co.  
*The Star Fields*, by Wiloughby Weaving. B. H. Blackwell, Oxford, Eng.  
*A Vagabond's Wallet*, by S. Reid-Heyman. B. H. Blackwell.  
*Rhymes of a Red Cross Man*, by Robert W. Service. Barse and Hopkins, New York.  
*The Great White Wall*, by William Rose Benét. Yale Univ. Press, New Haven, Conn.  
*Preludes of Poetry and Music*, by Irene Curtis. Privately printed.  
*Audvari's Ring*, by Arthur Peterson. G. P. Putnam's Sons.
- ANTHOLOGIES, TRANSLATIONS AND COLLECTED WORKS:  
*Selected Poems of Thomas Hardy*. Macmillan Co.  
*Poems of the Great War*, selected by J. W. Cunliffe. Macmillan Co.  
*Oxford Poetry—1916*. B. H. Blackwell, Oxford, Eng.  
*Songs of Ukrania*, Translated by Florence Randal Livesay. E. P. Dutton & Co.

### PROSE:

- Pencraft*, by William Watson. John Lane Co.  
*John Webster and the Elizabethan Drama*, by Rupert Brooke. John Lane Co.  
*Appreciations of Poetry*, by Lafcadio Hearn. Dodd, Mead & Co.




FEBRUARY, 1917

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ALONG THE SOUTH STAR TRAIL  
*Tribal Songs from the South-west*

THE TOM-TOM

RUM-BEAT, beat of drums,  
Pebble-rattle in the gourd,  
Pebble feet on drifting sand . . .  
Drum-beat, beat of drums—  
I have lost the wife-made robe of bear-skin . . .  
Take the prize—mine the loss.  
Have I lost too the courage of the black bear—  
His power, his thunder?  
Lul-la-by,  
Games' queer lullaby . . .  
O robe of mine!—  
O luck of mine!

Drum-beat, beat of drums,  
Pebble-rattle in the gourd,  
Coyote feet upon the plain . . .

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Drum-beat, beat of drums—  
Coyotes crushed the tender ham-string and the bone . . .  
A bull-calf bawls, dies alone.  
Where are the herds of buffalo and the hides,  
The meat, the tepees?  
Lul-la-by,  
Man's dread lullaby . . .  
O home of mine!  
O life of mine!

Drum-beat, beat of drums,  
Pebble-rattle in the gourd,  
Horse-hoof beat upon the ground . . .  
Drum-beat, beat of drums—  
By Wounded Knee ye buried them, buried them—  
Red men's flesh, their bones . . .  
By Wounded Knee we buried them, buried them.  
The songs we sung, the dreams . . . .  
Lul-la-by,  
The white man's lullaby . . .  
O race of mine!  
O brothers mine!

Drum-beat, beat of drums,  
Pebble-rattle in the gourd,  
Pulse-beat in the fever . . .  
Drum-beat, beat of drums—  
Famine drank from the gourd bottle, ate the gourd;  
Left the skin, the bone.

## *The Tom-tom*

She walked the pathway from the east, of the departed—  
Left me forsaken, alone . . . .

Lul-la-by,  
Tirawa's long lullaby . . .  
O blood of mine!  
O child of mine!

Drum-beat, beat of drums,  
Pebble-rattle in the gourd.  
Still feet in the grave-mound . . .  
Drum-beat, beat of drums—  
The gourd-rattle handle leads to the sun and life;  
Leaves clay, leaves cold.  
A purple smoke arises from bowl to float on winds;  
Leaves ashes—my ash . . . .  
Lul-la-by,  
Death's sweet lullaby . . .  
O flesh of mine!  
O hands of mine!

Drum-beat, beat of drums,  
Pebble-rattle in the gourd,  
Dream-feet in the yellow line . . .  
Drum-beat, beat of drums—  
One half the feather of Tirawa's bird is white;  
The other black—'tis night;  
Tirawa's song at night is morning star of dawn  
Where dance dreams, in light . . . .  
Lul-la-by,

## POETRY: *A Magazine of Verse*

The spirit's lullaby . . .

O soul of mine!

O breath of mine!

Drum-beat, beat of drums,

Pebble-rattle in the gourd,

Calves' feet in starry plains . . .

Drum-beat, beat of drums—

A sacred herd graze on tips of fair fresh flowers

In garden—Star of Evening's.

A bison drinks mixed all-waters, pure

From Spring; 'tis hers . . . .

Lul-la-by,

All-Life's lullaby . . .

O land of mine!

O plains of mine!

Drum-beat, beat of drums,

Pebble-rattle in the gourd,

Dance-feet 'round the sun . . .

Drum-beat, beat of drums—

By the sun see the dancing white men with the red—

By Wounded Knee, a post!

There they blend their songs together, brother-wise;

Here the post, the paint . . . .

Lul-la-by,

The Nation's lullaby . . .

O race of mine!

O brothers mine!

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*The Tom-tom*

Drum-beat, beat of drums,  
Pebble-rattle in the gourd,  
Child feet in the hogan . . .  
Drum-beat, beat of drums—  
A child has taught her little spider pet to weave  
\Bead-work at my door;  
A child has taught these dimming eyes to see  
Thread-work, star-lit lodge . . .  
Lul-la-by,  
Love's own lullaby . . .  
O hogan mine!  
O hogan thine!

Drum-beat, beat of drums,  
Pebble-rattle in the gourd,  
Soul-feet in trail of wind . . . .  
Drum-beat, beat of drums—  
Hear the great sea-feet, beating on the flint-rock!  
Drum-beat, beat of drum—  
Hear the beat of distant feet on South Star Trail!  
Drum-beat, beat of drum—  
Ti-ra-wa!  
Earth's great Ti-ra-wa.  
O heart-beat thine!  
O drum-beat thine!

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SA-A NARAI

So I heard it commanded,  
On the edge of the mesa,  
By the sitter on the mesa,  
In the season of falling leaves:

Count thou, my son, the lights on South Star Trail;

*Sa-a Narai*

Trust not time nor strength—they are twin liars;

*Sa-a Narai*

On track of birth-dance the mourners wail—

*Sa-a Narai*

The Tribe moves on—count thou the fires.

*Sa-a Narai*

Beads, a few in falling rain; grains in desert sand;

*Sa-a Narai*

The door of night swings wide—it will not close.

*Sa-a Narai*

Still room for beads, dying hills for land;

*Sa-a Narai*

The door is open—the Soul Trail glows.

*Sa-a Narai*

I counted my sheep but not the bones;

*Sa-a Narai*

A woman vows and goes her way;

*Sa-a Narai*

Dust-wedded wealth—the desert owns—

*Sa-a Narai*

Tomorrow smiles, while sad is yesterday.

*Sa-a Narai*

Feast on wit and beauty—pendants of bone—

*Sa-a Narai*

The eye-strings tie two souls today.

*Sa-a Narai*

Fill the earthen bowl—fill jar of stone—

*Sa-a Narai*

Tomorrow the empty socket fill with clay.

*Sa-a Narai*

There weaves a frost-chain, bends a flower ;

*Sa-a Narai*

Youth blooms fresh—spring has not gone ;

*Sa-a Narai*

Winter gathers, gathers fruit of spring shower ;

*Sa-a Narai*

The frost-chain shakes—a soul moves on.

*Sa-a Narai*

I saw a cripple, I saw a thief.

*Sa-a Narai*

Go, hoe your corn with shoulder-blade of deer.

*Sa-a Narai*

Where blows a wind, there stirs a leaf ;

*Sa-a Narai*

A bone enghosts a hoe—greed your spear.

*Sa-a Narai*

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If Red Moccasin moans, who knows the way?

*Sa-a Naraĩ*

I am ashamed before that standing within me—

*Sa-a Naraĩ*

The spirit upward flies—it will not stay;

*Sa-a Naraĩ*

Follow soon, thou must, the Voice within thee.

*Sa-a Naraĩ*

Shagwakwa laughs—in black night sings—

*Sa-a Naraĩ*

Give me my mother's bones—unto me, dreams!

*Sa-a Naraĩ*

A puff to the gods whither blue smoke wings—

*Sa-a Naraĩ*

Smoke now with me—soon the yellow line gleams.

*Sa-a Naraĩ*

Eat thy mother's flesh—she is the corn:

*Sa-a Naraĩ*

Is there a stranger who is not thy brother?

*Sa-a Naraĩ*

The One Above sung life—lo, love was born!

*Sa-a Naraĩ*

Hast shared the gift of thy first mother?

*Sa-a Naraĩ*

A little puff—a little kernel—

*Sa-a Naraĩ*

The Tribe moves on—it will not stay.

*Sa-a Naraĩ*



A little play by the trail eternal—

*Sa-a Naraï*

A little puff—lo, the South Star Way . . . . .

So I heard it chanted.

ON THE WAR-PATH

Hey—ye!

Hey!

Hey—now go, gather, gather living arrows, gather!

Stand ye in the white dawn—

Crouch, spring, run!

Hey now, plume feather, feather—eagle flying feather—

Strike ye in the red dawn!

Crouch, spring, run!

Hey, now pray power of storm!

Hey, now pray lightning's bolt!

Hey, now pray power of flint!

Hey, now pray weather, weather—war-like, stormy weather!

Slay ye in the yellow dawn—

Crouch, spring, run!

Hey, now go, gather, gather, bleeding bonnets gather—huh!

NIGHT

Woeful, hear the shadows creep;

Woeful, hear the tread of sleep.

*Who spoke?*

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It was a lone whip-poor-will  
By the fallen tree, chanting mournfully  
For the dead, or stretching a memory thread  
Between the Now and Other Years;  
Striking his harp  
Of tears.

Sweetness, see the stars appear;  
Sweetness, see the eyes draw near.

*Who winked?*

It was the smallest fire-fly,  
Here and there and now nowhere,  
Dust of star come down so far  
To the little Below from the great Above,  
Flashing his signals  
Of love.

Lovely, see the moon aflush;  
Lovely, see the maiden blush.

*Who whispered?*

It was the tiny hidden spring,  
From light caress of tenderness  
Sending back on a trembling track  
A kiss from the Here to a golden Sphere;  
Lifting her lips  
In fear.

Wondrous, hear the night-wings whir.  
Wondrous, hear the phantoms stir.

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*Who sighed?*

It was the little top-most leaf  
Of aspen bough, when rocked somehow  
By a hand somewhere; hearing the air  
Of that which Is in that which Seems,  
    Wafting its heart  
    Of dreams.

Holy, feel the touch of dew;  
Holy, feel the kiss anew.

*Who breathed?*

It was the humblest flower,  
Whose humid scent in petal tent  
Turned up the flap and, joy enwrapped,  
Escaped the clay to float on air;  
    Nodding her head  
    In prayer.

Sadness, touch of the mystic scene—  
Sadness, touch of the hand unseen!

*Who prayed?*

It was I, but a new-born babe,  
Whose thoughts unpent, in bewilderment,  
Fumbled for light in the web of night;  
A cry of nothingness unto infinite skies;  
    Sweeping my strings  
    Of sighs.

*Frank S. Gordon*

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IN THE DESERT

I

I have seen you, O king of the dead,  
More beautiful than sunlight.

Your kiss is like quicksilver;  
But I turned my face aside  
Lest you should touch my lips.

In the field with the flowers  
You stood darkly.

My knees trembled, and I knew  
That no other joy would be like this.

But the warm field, and the sunlight,  
And the few years of my girlhood  
Came before me, and I cried,  
*Not yet!*  
*Not yet, O dark lover!*

You were patient.

—I know you will come again.

I have seen you, O king of the dead,  
More beautiful than sunlight.

II

Here in the desert, under the cottonwoods  
That keep up a monotonous wind-murmur of leaves,  
I can hear the water dripping  
Through the canals in Venice  
From the oar of the gondola  
Hugging the old palaces,  
Beautiful old houses  
Sinking quietly into decay. . . . .

O sunlight—how many things you gild  
With your eternal gold!  
Sunlight—and night—are everlasting.

III

Once every twenty-four hours  
Earth has a moment of indecision:  
*Shall I go on?—*  
*Shall I keep turning?—*  
*Is it worth while?*  
Everything holds its breath.  
The trees huddle anxiously  
On the edge of the arroyo,  
And then, with a tremendous heave,  
Earth shoves the hours on towards dawn.

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### IV

Four o'clock in the afternoon.  
A stream of money is flowing down Fifth Avenue.

They speak of the fascination of New York  
Climbing aboard motor-busses to look down on the endless  
play  
From the Bay to the Bronx.  
But it is forever the same:  
There is no *life* there.

Watching a cloud on the desert,  
Endlessly watching small insects crawling in and out of  
the shadow of a cactus,  
A herd-boy on the horizon driving goats,  
Uninterrupted sky and blown sand:  
Space—volume—silence—  
Nothing but life on the desert,  
Intense life.

### V

The hill cedars and piñons  
Point upward like flames,  
Like smoke they are drawn upward  
From the face of the mountains.  
Over the sunbaked slopes,

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## *In the Desert*

Patches of sun-dried adobes straggle;  
Willows along the acequias in the valley  
Give cool streams of green;  
Beyond, on the bare hillsides,  
Yellow and red gashes and bleached white paths  
Give foothold to the burros,  
To the black-shawled Mexican girls  
Who go for water.

### INDIAN SONGS

#### LISTENING

The noise of passing feet  
On the prairie—  
Is it men or gods  
Who come out of the silence?

#### BUFFALO DANCE

Strike ye our land  
With curved horns!  
Now with cries  
Bending our bodies,  
Breathe fire upon us;

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Now with feet  
Trampling the earth,  
Let your hoofs  
Thunder over us!  
Strike ye our land  
With curved horns!

### WHERE THE FIGHT WAS

In the place where the fight was  
Across the river,  
In the place where the fight was  
Across the river:  
A heavy load for a woman  
To lift in her blanket,  
A heavy load for a woman  
To carry on her shoulder.  
In the place where the fight was  
Across the river,  
In the place where the fight was  
Across the river:  
The women go wailing  
To gather the wounded,  
The women go wailing  
To pick up the dead.



## *The Wind*

### THE WIND

The wind is carrying me round the sky;  
The wind is carrying me round the sky.  
My body is here in the valley—  
The wind is carrying me round the sky.

### COURTSHIP

When I go I will give you surely  
What you will wear if you go with me;  
A blanket of red and a bright girdle,  
Two new moccasins and a silver necklace.  
When I go I will give you surely  
What you will wear if you go with me!

### FEAR

The odor of death  
In the front of my body,  
The odor of death  
Before me—

Is there any one  
Who would weep for me?  
My wife  
Would weep for me.

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### PARTING

Now I go, do not weep, woman—  
Woman, do not weep;  
Though I go from you to die,  
We shall both lie down  
At the foot of the hill, and sleep.

Now I go, do not weep, woman—  
Woman, do not weep;  
Earth is our mother and our tent the sky.  
Though I go from you to die,  
We shall both lie down  
At the foot of the hill, and sleep.

*Alice Corbin*

## NEITHER SPIRIT NOR BIRD

### *Shoshone Love Song*

—Neither spirit nor bird—  
That was my flute you heard  
Last night by the river.  
When you came with your wicker jar  
Where the river drags the willows,  
That was my flute you heard,  
Wacoba, Wacoba,  
Calling, Come to the willows!

Neither the wind nor a bird  
Rustled the lupin blooms—  
That was my blood you heard  
Answer your garment's hem  
Whispering through the grasses;  
That was my blood you heard  
By the wild rose under the willows.

That was no beast that stirred—  
That was my heart you heard,  
Pacing to and fro  
In the ambush of my desire  
To the flute's four-noted call.  
Wacoba, Wacoba,  
That was my heart you heard  
Leaping under the willows.

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PRAYER TO THE MOUNTAIN SPIRIT

*From the Navajo*

Lord of the Mountain,  
Reared within the Mountain,  
Young Man, Chieftain,  
Hear a young man's prayer!

Hear a prayer for cleanness.  
Keeper of the strong rain  
Drumming on the mountain,  
Lord of the small rain  
That restores the earth in newness,  
Keeper of the clean rain,  
Hear a prayer for wholeness.

Young Man, Chieftain,  
Hear a prayer for fleetness.  
Keeper of the deer's way,  
Reared among the eagles,  
Clear my feet of slothness.  
Keeper of the paths of men,  
Hear a prayer for straightness.

Hear a prayer for braveness.  
Lord of the thin peaks,  
Reared amid the thunders,

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*Prayer to the Mountain Spirit*

Keeper of the headlands  
That uphold the earth in harvest,  
Keeper of the strong rocks  
Hear a prayer for staunchness.

Young Man, Chieftain,  
Spirit of the Mountain!

*Mary Austin*

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SPRING TO THE EARTH-WITCH

*Pai-ya to Swi-ya Kwenewesals*

My eyes I will not cover!  
I am Pai-ya, stepping free on the goat-hills behind thy  
village.  
Blue shadows and white mists, like flowers,  
Lie deep in thy green forests.  
Night lingers in thy hair;  
Pools of starred dusk are thine eyes.  
Thy speech is gray fog, impenetrable,  
Shrouding the port of the crimson lure—  
(The ships of the trusting one are broken).  
Oh, flower-red is thy girdle at morning and evening!  
If it were loosened there would be a race of men,  
And thou the harbor of a thousand wondering ships.  
I have lifted dawn before me as a shield,  
Swi-ya Kwen-e-we-sals!

The Raven pecks beside thy door;  
On thy roof the Thunder-Bird claps his wings;  
Thy smile darkles across the skies.  
Thy smile is death—  
My heart is the riven sea beneath.  
If thy scarlet girdle were unknotted would it stem the sea  
of my wound?  
Nay! Call not me with the wind blowing through thy  
garments!

*Spring to the Earth-Witch*

I have bound the mountains to my feet,  
Swi-ya Kwen-e-we-sals!

Last night I saw winged stars in flight  
Circling o'er thy dwelling.  
They swung at rest on the points of the shore pine—  
Torches red-spanning the bay.  
My wolves, at my call,  
In long gray troops fled up from the forest.  
They sphered in guard about me—sleeping on my shield  
poised on the four world-crag—  
As darkened silver cloud-mists wind about the moon.  
I have shepherded them into the canyon between us—  
(But my eyes I will not cover!)  
Wilt thou come, daring, among my fanged flocks,  
Swi-ya Kwen-e-we-sals?

What is this warmth stealing to my height  
Like footsteps of a strange desire?  
Wave on wave of pink and gold breaks over the white;  
The petals open, chirring,  
As if they were feathers on the Song-bird's swelling throat.  
My wolves, with heads hanging and fangs covered, slowly  
moving, moving,  
Huddle in the valley like sky-shadows before rain.  
Whose steps flow and ripple over the dark moss,  
Parting the green walls of cedars,  
Blossoming among my mating flocks?  
Whence this unraveling of flame blown loose across the air?

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My eyes I will not cover!  
I have woven thongs of the mountain mists  
And bound me to the morning star.  
Between the cliffs of Night and Day, thou emergest!—  
Thy sod-brown bosom, the mystical craving eyes above;  
The yearning fragrance of thy closed hands,  
The wild winds between thy feet,  
And the rivers under thy girdle!  
I have cast down the great shield of the dawn!  
Come, redden its rim with me,  
Swi-ya Kwen-e-we-sals!

### CHIEF \*CAPILANO GREETES HIS NAMESAKE AT DAWN

White Head of Waters, White Head of Light—  
Capilano; Cla'h'ya.  
White head of the Chief to thee lifts greeting.  
I am hoar with years as thou, great Father;  
My hair hangs like the dropping ice  
Of thy highest hushed waters.  
I have lived a hundred years at thy foot,  
Singing the prayer of thanks for life:

*\*Capilano, White Head of Waters, meaning dome-shaped, also containing sense of light: the highest white-capped mountain on Vancouver's harbor, B. C.; name of the aged chief of the tribe inhabiting the village at its foot. Cla'h'ya is a phrase of greeting.*



*Chief Capilano Greets His Namesake*

"O Kia-Kunāē, Great Spirit One, Great Kind One,  
I praise thee for life, I serve thee with living,  
I bless thee that in kindness thou hast made the earth  
And with love covered it.  
Yea, by thy kindness, men and trees stand forth;  
Silently, to me, speak they the speech of brothers.  
For delights the little rivers come among the hills,  
Shining with the smiles of women;  
Ay, as the merry murmuring of many maidens  
Are the rivers; swift and tender in their coming.  
(Because thou art Kind, Kunāē, thou madest women.)  
It is the morn, Kunāē, I pray, I praise thee."  
Ah!—how many hundred years hast thou prayed thus,  
Capilano?  
With thee this day, Mountain-Father, I thank Kunāē for  
another dawn.  
I am girt with blanket and rope of cedar-fibre;  
In my ear is a ring of fine bark.  
Thou art belted with innumerable pine-trees;  
To thee they are smaller than feathers.  
The sun is the cedar-ring in thine ear,  
The long sea asleep is the spear in thy hand.  
It is still, with pale lights on the distant blade,  
Pointing at rest to islands beyond the dropping sky.  
Thou art come forth, as a hunter, to the dawn,  
Herding the antlered shadows down the forest slope.  
Their swift fleeing hoofs strike fire from the beaten sand-  
shores of morning,

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And the black wraiths swoon upon the bright opening sea.  
With blood of his proud throat crimsoning the eastern sky  
The great Stag of the Dark in the van falls dying.

Here was I chief ere the coming of the white man;  
Now is his village spread from this sea beyond my sight.  
His canoes are floating villages;  
They go by with a great noise and a black smoke.  
His deeds are mighty; they leap with roaring clouds and  
thunder-fires  
Into the blue quiet morning and the white moon-sky.

. . . . .

Yet have I heard no sound mightier  
Than the sun shattering the night  
On thy stone shoulder, Capilano.  
Yet have I seen no sight more wonderful and fair  
Than the coming of the light,  
When Day, the silver-winged gull, down-swooping finds the  
sea.

Yet have I known no thing sweeter, stronger,  
Than the smell of piney winds and blue rippling sea-water,  
And the kindness of Kunāē-Kia, the living One,  
Waking the heart of the old chief  
To another dawn of life.

*Constance Lindsay Skinner*

## POEMS

### OLD MAN

Old Man, or Lad's-love—in the name there's nothing  
To one that knows not Lad's-love, or Old Man:  
The hoar-green feathery herb, almost a tree,  
Growing with rosemary and lavender.  
Even to one that knows it well, the names  
Half decorate, half perplex, the thing it is:  
At least, what that is clings not to the name  
In spite of time. And yet I like the names.

The herb itself I like not, but for certain  
I love it, as some day the child will love it  
Who plucks a feather from the door-side bush  
Whenever she goes in or out of the house.  
Often she waits there, snipping the tips and shrivelling  
The shreds at last on to the path, perhaps  
Thinking, perhaps of nothing, till she sniffs  
Her fingers and runs off. The bush is still  
But half as tall as she, though it is as old—  
So well she clips it. Not a word she says;  
And I can only wonder how much hereafter  
She will remember, with that bitter scent,  
Of garden rows, and ancient damson-trees  
Topping a hedge, a bent path to a door,  
A low thick bush beside the door, and me  
Forbidding her to pick.

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As for myself,  
Where first I met the bitter scent, is lost.  
I, too, often shrivel the grey shreds,  
Sniff them and think and sniff again, and try  
Once more to think what it is I am remembering  
Always in vain. I cannot like the scent,  
Yet I would rather give up others more sweet,  
With no meaning, than this bitter one.

I have mislaid the key. I sniff the spray  
And think of nothing; I see and I hear nothing;  
Yet seem, too, to be listening, lying in wait  
For what I should, yet never can, remember:  
No garden appears, no path, no hoar-green bush  
Of Lad's-love, or Old Man, no child beside,  
Neither father nor mother, nor any playmate;  
Only an avenue, dark, nameless, without end.

### THE WORD

There are so many things I have forgot,  
That once were much to me, or that were not—  
All lost, as is a childless woman's child  
And its child's children, in the undefiled  
Abyss of what can never be again.  
I have forgot, too, names of the mighty men  
That fought and lost or won in the old wars;  
Of kings and fiends and gods, and most of the stars.

## *The Word*

Some things I have forgot that I forget.  
But lesser things there are, remembered yet,  
Than all the others. One name that I have not—  
Though 'tis an empty thingless name—forgot  
Never can die because spring after spring  
Some thrushes learn to say it as they sing.  
There is always one at midday saying it clear  
And tart—the name, only the name I hear.  
While perhaps I am thinking of the elder scent  
That is like food; or while I am content  
With the wild rose scent that is like memory,  
This name suddenly is cried out to me  
From somewhere in the bushes by a bird  
Over and over again, a pure thrush word.

### THE UNKNOWN

She is most fair;  
And when they see her pass  
The poets' ladies  
Look no more in the glass,  
But after her.

On a bleak moor  
Running under the moon  
She lures a poet,  
Once proud or happy, soon  
Far from his door.

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Beside a train,  
Because they saw her go,  
Or failed to see her,  
Travellers and watchers know  
Another pain.

The simple lack  
Of her is more to me  
Than others' presence,  
Whether life splendid be  
Or utter black.

I have not seen,  
I have no news of her;  
I can tell only  
She is not here, but there  
She might have been.

She is to be kissed  
Only perhaps by me;  
She may be seeking  
Me and no other: she  
May not exist.

*Edward Eastaway*

## EDITORIAL COMMENT

### ABORIGINAL POETRY

#### I



**I**N OFFERING to our readers a number almost entirely devoted to poems from American-Indian motives, it seems proper to call their attention to the rich mines of folk-lore still unrevealed, or but half revealed, among our aboriginal tribes. The poems we present are not translations, but interpretations: they use subjects and rhythms drawn from aboriginal life and song; and, in Dr. Gordon's case at least, they should be read—or rather chanted—to the accompaniment of a posture dance and the strong beat of an instrument.

Vivid as such work is in its suggestion of racial feeling and rhythm, it gives merely a hint of the deeper resources—it is a mere outcropping of the mine. But, although the mine exists with its stores of treasure, the danger is that the tribes, in the process of so-called civilization, will lose all trace of it; that their beautiful primitive poetry will perish among the ruins of obliterated states.

Thus we owe a special debt of gratitude to the few enthusiasts who have done something to preserve the fast disappearing folk-lore of the tribes. Few red men are numbered among them, though Charles Alexander Eastman has retold two or three volumes of tales from the Ohiyesa and Sioux tribes; also, many tribal poets have generously coöperated with their white investigators.

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There are, of course, two methods of approach to this literature—that of science and that of art. These two overlap, however, because science often uses an artist to make its researches; one who, as in Frank Cushing's case, uncovers whatever beauty he finds with reverence and without violence. Work of great value has been done by the U. S. Bureau of Ethnology, the Peabody Museum of Harvard, the Universities of California and other western states, the Carnegie Institution of Washington, the Field Columbian Museum of Chicago, and the American folk-lore and antiquarian societies; so that we have such books and reports as George A. Dorsey's *Pawnee Mythology and Traditions of the Arapaho*, William D. Lyman's *Oregon Myths*, Washington Matthews' *Navajo Legends*, Stephen C. Simms' *Traditions of the Crows* and Henry R. Voth's *Traditions of the Hopi*. In addition to these, we have a few more or less scientific or philosophic books of comparison or reflection, like Jeremiah Curtin's *Creation Myths of Primitive America in Relation to the Religious History and Mental Development of Mankind*; or Ellen R. Emerson's *Indian Myths of All America Compared with Myths of Other Nations*.

Then there are books by private investigators and enthusiasts, like George Bird Grinnell's careful transcripts of *Blackfoot Lodge Tales* and *Pawnee Hero Stories*, Charles F. Lummis' *Pueblo Folk Stories*, James W. Schultz' *Blackfoot Tales of Glacier National Park*, and others; besides the numerous more popular versions for grown-ups and children.



## Aboriginal Poetry

A few investigators, however, have gone further in an effort to perpetuate the poetry and music of the redskins. Miss Natalie Curtis, for example, cannot be too highly praised for the loving care and painstaking research which have given us *The Indian's Book*, which she calls "an offering by the American Indians of Indian lore, musical and narrative, to form a record of the songs and legends of their race." Miss Alice C. Fletcher, in *Indian Story and Song, Indian Games and Dances*, etc., has studied the songs and festivals of various tribes, transcribing the music with both the original words and literal translations. And Mr. Sandburg will speak below of the work of Miss Frances Densmore. The phonograph is a valuable aid to these modern investigators. I myself saw the Snake-dance of the Hopis, in the lofty "sky-city" of Walpi; and I longed to be able to transcribe and translate those ancient chants which rose out of the desert as fitly as the mesa or the sunrise.

But of all the students in this field, Frank Hamilton Cushing—who died too young, alas!—probably had the most sympathetic and creative mind. As he accepted the life of the Zuñis and became an adopted son of the tribe, so he entered fully into the spirit of their religion and poetry, and left us, in his beautiful translation of *The Creation Myth of the Zunis*, a masterpiece of primitive song which should rank, and undoubtedly will ultimately rank, among the great epics of the world. At present it is hidden in one of those massive tomes which entomb the annual reports of the U. S. Bureau of Ethnology, and it is a reproach to our civilization that no

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publisher has yet dug it out for all to see. But sooner or later it is sure of a shining resurrection. Cushing's *Zuni Folk-tales*, published in 1901, fine, as they are, are not comparable with this heroic epic of a fading race. *H. M.*

### II

The researches and translations by Miss Frances Densmore of Red Indian songs have become somewhat known in the musical world, where adaptations have been made from her work for orchestral and choral use. In the literary world this work has, however, escaped analysis, or even such notice as it deserves in "news value." The explanation probably is that Miss Densmore's work was done for the United States government and forms two official reports of the Bureau of Ethnology. As no efforts are made by that organization to exploit and advertise a writer, the researches and translations have slumbered in a more or less innocuous desuetude.

The woman spent two years among Chippewa tribes and had the help of tribesmen who had lived twenty-five years on the White Earth Reservation in Minnesota. *Chippewa Music* is the title of the two volumes containing her notes and observations, and they constitute Bulletin 45 and Bulletin 53 of the Bureau of Ethnology. In both volumes are songs of tribal games and dances, songs "composed in dreams," and individual songs of forgotten warriors.

*I Have Lost My Sweetheart* and *I Will Not Drink* are names of love songs. *He Killed a Man* and *I Carry It Away*

## *Aboriginal Poetry*

are dance songs. And Chippewa juveniles have the *Song of the Game of Silence* and the *Song of the Crawfish*.

Suspicion arises definitely that the Red Man and his children committed direct plagiarisms on the modern imagists and vorticists. These are specimens:

### MY LOVE HAS DEPARTED

A loon  
I thought it was  
But it was  
My love's  
Splashing oar.

To Sault Ste. Marie  
He has departed.  
My love has gone on before me.  
Never again can I see him.

### LOVE CHARM SONG

What are you saying to me?  
I am arrayed like the roses,  
And beautiful as they.

### SONG FOR THE CURE OF THE SICK

They are in close consultation  
With their heads together,  
Wenabojo and his grandmother.

### DOCTOR'S SONG

I am singing and dreaming in my poor way  
Over the earth,  
I who will again disembark  
Upon the earth.

*Carl Sandburg*

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### III

In my brief *Indian Songs* I have taken the Indian key-note—which is often not more than a phrase, a single image, with variations of musical inflection and repetition—and expanded it very slightly. The Indian song often means more than it says; it is content to give the image and not to talk about it—it is not “journalistic.” Pantomime in the dances also fills out what is given to us by the bare words.

Very little consideration has been given to Indian poetry as poetry. The ethnologists, who might have done good service in this respect, have overlooked the literary significance of the Indian songs; and the tendency of others has been to Europeanize both sentiment and form. A translation of an Indian song that reads like an Elizabethan lyric gives little idea of the original. Of course any addition whatever is taking liberties with the originals, but I have tried to keep strictly within the spirit of them. I am indebted for my key-notes to the literal translations accompanying Miss Densmore's notations of Indian music. A. C. H.

ÉMILE VERHAEREN

*May 21st, 1855—Nov. 29th, 1916*

The death of Verhaeren is one more note in the tragedy.

Il est ainsi de pauvres coeurs,  
Avec, en eux, des lacs de pleurs,  
Qui sont pâles, comme les pierres  
D'un cimetière.

Il est ainsi de pauvres dos,  
Plus lourds de peine et de fardeaux

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*Émile Verhaeren*

Que les toits des cassines brunes  
Parmi les dunes.

Il est ainsi de pauvres mains,  
Comme feuilles sur les chemins  
Comme feuilles jaunes et mortes

Devant la porte.  
Il est ainsi de pauvres yeux,  
Humbles et bons et soucieux,  
Et plus tristes que ceux des bêtes  
Sous la tempête.

Il est ainsi de pauvres gens,  
Aux gestes las et indulgents,  
Sur qui s'acharne la misère  
Au long des plaines de la terre.

The man should have no epitaph save his own best verses, poems of the Flamand country, of the dull sorrow of peasants, of the oppression of labor.

It is time to forget his rhetorical period, to forget that he pleased Gilbert Murray, and time to remember only his great sincerity, his great pity and the simplicity of his heart. He was excited by current generalities, in his worst moments he wrote such lines as:

Le bondissant tocsin des vérités vivantes,

In his reality he wrote such poems as the one I have quoted. Toward the end he wrote of the new sorrows of warfare, of men who had sat at his fireside and who in future would sit there no more.

Depuis la guerre  
Ma chambre est close et solitaire;

Car je n'ai plus pour compagnon  
Que mon foyer à qui je parle.

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It is extremely difficult to write of Verhaeren at this moment and for the public of a country not at war. He was recognized as the greatest poet of Belgium, though heretical voices have also been heard acclaiming Max Elskamp. There is always danger of overestimating a man, and of sentimentalizing over him, at the moment of his death, especially if it be sudden and violent. And such overestimation invariably leads to an equally undue reaction, both equitable minds and those tainted with jealousy adding their weight to this latter.

I think I am right in saying that Verhaeren carried more weight with the better young poets of Paris, five years ago, than did most, or perhaps any, of his contemporaries. Fort was also at that time in vogue. And Bazalgette had stirred up a fresh flurry of Whitmanism by his very excellent French translation. Verhaeren's faults were not those which irritated most during that season. He and Whitman were the saints of one temple.

I can not feel that he is so great a loss as Remy de Gourmont, but this is a personal and not a detached judicial opinion. Besides, DeGourmont's position was based in great part on his prose.

I doubt if there is as much good poetry in Verhaeren as in the earlier books of poems by Francis Jammes. I do not know that Verhaeren's pictures of Flemish country are better than Viélé-Griffin's "*Lâche comme le froid et la pluie*". I am fairly certain that his death leaves Laurent Tailhade the most important of the elder poets in France, or at least

the only one of the elder men from whom we can still expect enjoyable poems. Tailhade must not be considered as satirist only, though his satires make swiftest appeal.

This whole French generation of men born in the late fifties and early sixties has presented the curious phenomenon of a dozen or two poets all "running even", all producing notable poems, none of them notably surpassing or dominating the rest. At no time would a company of a dozen intelligent literati have agreed on an order of prominence. This state of affairs might easily exist in a time of nonentities. It was in this case a sign of France's opulence, and though Verhaeren was not French he used the French language and his death must be held a loss to that literature. However much one may associate him with his own country, one must reckon his gifts in comparison with those of his French contemporaries. He was counted peer with the best of them.

*Exra Pound*

## REVIEWS

### THOSE BRONTES

*Brontë Poems*: edited, and with an introduction, by A. C. Benson. G. P. Putnam's Sons.

*The Complete Works of Emily Brontë*. Volume I—Poetry.

Edited by W. Robertson Nicoll and Clement Shorter. Nodder and Stoughton.

In 1846, the poems of Charlotte, Emily and Anne Brontë under the pseudonyms of Currer, Ellis and Acton Bell, were

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published by Aylott and Jones. Mr. Clement Shorter tells us that the book cost the authors thirty guineas and two copies supplied the public demand. In 1850, after the death of Emily and Anne, Charlotte issued a new edition of the 1846 volume, including other poems of theirs and notes of her own.

The little book Mr. Benson has arranged so wisely, is composed of selections from these publications, and from hitherto unprinted verses of Charlotte, Emily, Anne and Branwell. Prefaced by a reproduction of the painting of the four, now in the National Portrait Gallery, the frank purpose and the chief interest of the collection are biographical.

This interest, however, by no means arises from internal evidence that the poems are autobiographical. In Emily Brontë's haunting poem, *My Ancient Ship*, composed in her twenty-first year, she makes her voyaging hero say,

Memory! how thy magic fingers  
With a wild and passing thrill, ..  
Wake the chord whose spirit lingers,  
Sleeping silently and still  
Fast asleep and almost dying,  
Through my days of changeless pain,  
Till I dream these strings are lying,  
Never to be waked again.  
Winds have blown, but all unknown;  
Nothing could arouse a tone  
In that heart which like a stone  
Senselessly has lain.

But Emily Brontë's own heart, it seems, was not so heavy but that she could scribble gaily in a communicative and humorous outburst, along the margin of *My Ancient Ship*:

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## Those Brontës

I am more terrifically and infernally and idiotically stupid than ever I was in the whole course of my incarnate existence. The above precious lines are the fruits of one hour's most agonizing labor between half-past six and half-past seven in the evening of July, 1836.

The inclusion in the edition of this remark of Emily's may perform a needed service to letters in aiding to clear that dull literary muddle in which the Brontës' lives are read into their work, and their work into their lives, until neither has any distinct or integral value. As Henry James has acutely observed:

The personal position of the three sisters, of the two in particular, had been marked with so sharp an accent that this accent has become for us the very tone of their united production. It covers and supplants their spirit, their style, their taste. . . . Literature is an objective, a projected result; it is life that is the unconscious, the agitated, the struggling, floundering cause. But the fashion has been, in looking at the Brontës, so to confuse the cause with the result that we cease to know, in the presence of such ecstasies, what we have held or what we are talking about. They represent, the ecstasies, the high-water mark of sentimental judgment.

While it is true that life gave the Brontës a deep knowledge of sadness, it must be remembered that melancholy was the conventional, poetical mood of the day—the day of the vogue of weeping willow trees, and of a species of satisfaction in being deserted. When even a person as devoted to inconstancy by nature, and it may almost be said by principle, as Lord Byron, wrote in the literary temper of—

Though human, thou didst not deceive me;

Though woman, thou didst not forsake;

Though loved, thou forborest to grieve me—

do you believe Charlotte Brontë says in *Frances*—

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Unloved, I love; unwept I weep;  
Grief I restrain, hope I repress;  
Vain is this anguish—fixed and deep;  
Vainer, desires and dreams of bliss—

because she was unloved and unwept and in anguish? No more than Shakespeare wrote,

Farewell, a long farewell to all my greatness,  
because he had just lost an archbiscopric; or than Mr. Sargent painted Carmencita because he had been carrying a fan and dancing the Cachuca.

Charlotte's verses have a few, a very few, fine moments, and a distant family resemblance to poetry. Branwell's verses have for me no interest whatever but the signature of a brother of the Brontës. The distinct poetical endowment is Anne's and Emily's. The younger sister's contribution is very slight; much of it merely formal, merely pietistic. But in other instances, infinitely touching and genuinely religious, the material of her poetry is the very stuff of the music that dreams are made of—the mystery, the inexplicable deep sympathies of life. The most vivid element in the book is of course the poetry of Emily.

Though in *Brontë Poems* the two heretofore unpublished selections, disentangled from the difficult manuscript of her notebook, are characteristic; and though the whole text of her work in this edition, is, in my view, more sympathetically arranged than in the volume devoted exclusively to her own production, yet this volume is naturally more completely representative.

Emily Brontë's poetry, full of the profound charm of the

## *Those Brontës*

shadowed things of life, like the stormy twilight she so often evokes for us, echoes with the

Wild words of an ancient song,  
Undefined, without a name.

The beauty of the rain, the cold, the ways of nature that have no benison for man, she was one of the first to express. The acute sweetness of that song has been too little appreciated. She has suffered too untempered a fame, for one whose phrase, like Shakespeare's, has the rich power that swings with a full movement through both the passions and the dearnesses of existence:

Redbreast, early in the morning,  
Dark and cold and cloudy gray,  
Wildly tender is thy music  
Chasing angry thought away.

Pain, bereavement, defeat, freedom and imprisonment, the prospect of death, a fast allegiance with suffering, the love of dumb creatures, the passion of human justice, the inmost life, the will's life, the intensest forces of meditation—she says them all. Some of her expression is clumsy, her rhyme weak and forced, but the root of the music that speaks inarticulately is always there, the communicative power of tonal design, though often only roughly sketched. On every page, something beckons, something gleams; plunging horse-hoofs gallop in the distance; a great light splinters on the point of a Valkyrie's spear; and deep in the reader's soul the splendor of a woman's voice calls out through the ride down the mountain-tops.

One is glad to see the heroic fragments, and the un-heroic, unfinished designs, which the book includes—too many, and

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of too many kinds, to tell in detail. Death arrested the designer's hand, that yet left behind it the earnest of immortality, the very proof, as it were, of the truth of one of her most stirring and beautiful stanzas.

Nature's deep being thine shall hold,  
Her spirit all thy spirit fold,  
Her breath absorb thy sighs.  
Mortal, though soon life's tale is told—  
Who once lives, never dies!

*Edith Wyatt*

### A BOOK BY LAWRENCE

*Amores*, by D. H. Lawrence. B. W. Huebsch, New York.

The pages of this book are the record of a great struggle. Through these poems, and over them, we feel the beating and lashing of a restless, passionate soul, passionate in its loves and aspirations, that is clogged with flesh, caught in meshes of flesh and held prisoner. The ache of "brown hands", the throbbing of blood in the darkness—these are with Lawrence always. Seldom has anyone expressed with such vividness the tinge that stifled flesh gives to the universe, the urge that gives to flowers and stars the wine-color of longing, and brings into tense, passionate relief details that otherwise were meaningless. *Snap-dragon* is perhaps the best poem of its kind in English.

Yet there is seldom any pagan joy in the things of the flesh. They come to him not as light, but as darkness, as something that clogs and hinders him, something that he must fight through and cannot—yet. And it is the vain

struggle to free himself that has given us the beauty of this book.

His aspirations are as passionate as his loves. What could be more spiritually impassioned than this from *Dreams Old and Nascent*?

Oh the terrible ecstasy of the consciousness that I am life!  
Oh the miracle of the whole, the widespread, laboring concentration  
Swelling mankind like one bud to bring forth the fruit of a dream!  
Oh the terror of lifting the innermost I out of the sweep of the  
    impulse of life,  
And watching the great Thing laboring through the whole round  
    flesh of the world;  
And striving to catch a glimpse of the shape of the coming dream,  
As it quickens within the laboring, white-hot metal;  
Catch the scent and color of the coming dream,  
Then to fall back exhausted into the unconscious, molten life!

Yet, though the key-note of the book is this passionate struggle, there are calmer moments in it, moments that presage the later Lawrence who is already emerging from the welter. For the poems in this volume are for the most part early work, and a number more recent, already known to readers of POETRY, are not included. Here is a steady little picture in a quieter vein, called *Patience*.

A wind comes from the north  
Blowing little flocks of birds  
Like a spray across the town;  
And a train, roaring forth,  
Rushes stampeding down  
With cries and flying curds  
Of steam, out of the darkening north.

Whither I turn and set  
Like a needle steadfastly,  
Waiting ever to get  
The news that she is free;

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But ever fixed, as yet,  
To the lode of her agony.

And where can we find anything more humanly and poignantly beautiful than *A Baby Asleep After Pain*?

As a drenched, drowned bee  
Hangs numb and heavy from a bending flower,  
So clings to me  
My baby, her brown hair brushed with wet tears  
And laid against her cheek;  
Her soft white legs hanging heavily over my arm  
Swinging heavily to my movement as I walk.  
My sleeping baby hangs upon my life,  
Like a burden she hangs on me.  
She has always seemed so light,  
But now she is wet with tears and numb with pain.  
Even her floating hair sinks heavily,  
Reaching downwards;  
As the wings of a drenched, drowned bee  
Are a heaviness, and a weariness.

Several of the poems in this book are already known to American lovers of poetry. *Snap-dragon* was in the first *Georgian Verse* anthology, and four of the other poems, under different titles, have been published in *POETRY*, although no reference is made to the fact. But, read as a whole, the book has a cumulative effect that sets Lawrence definitely in the front rank of English poets. *E. T.*

### H. D.'S VISION

*Sea-garden*, by H. D. The New Poetry Series. Boston, Houghton-Mifflin Co.; London, Constable & Co.

The great mystics, whether they call themselves Christians or pagans, have all this trait in common—that they describe in terms of ordinary experience some super-normal

experience. The unpractised reader, picking up H. D.'s *Sea-garden* and reading it casually, might suppose it was all about flowers and rocks and waves and Greek myths, when it is really about the soul, or the primal intelligence, or the *Nous*, or whatever we choose to call that link that binds us to the unseen and uncreated.

This small volume is indeed a garden, but of such flowers as not many eyes may see: flowers in some way made perfect and unfading through their own exceeding bitterness. The light burns sharp here, like a sword; it is painful to walk in the glare of this beauty. Here are useless and beautiful things: flowers rootless, scentless; and beyond, the everlasting grind of the sea on the rocks, and a lonely temple or statue, aloof and unresponding. And if we wander here long enough and make our minds receptive to these influences, we soon discover that all this is only a veil of beautiful texture hung before the shrine. Behind the veil we can catch with ever-increasing brightness the outline of a myth, that is to say, an eternal reflection of the ephemeral. To penetrate H. D.'s inner meaning, it is only necessary that we approach her poetry with an open and responsive mind—that we make a mirror of ourselves to reflect the light she has caught in *her* mirror. But this state of mind, receptive, quiescent, is also necessary if we are to understand Plotinus, or Dionysius the Areopagite, or Paracelsus, or Behmen, or Swedenborg, or Blake, or any other of the mystics.

As I read and re-read this small volume for it is necessary to read it many times, I cease to care whether this is

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or is not what the academic critics choose to label Poetry, or whether it is or is not Imagism. Whatever it is, the form is as inevitable as the substance, since neither form nor substance has been created independently. It is beauty independent of laws, holding but to its own hard and bitter perfection. Perhaps not to many it will appeal, because most of us have the human thirst for imperfection; for the sea-change and not for the sea-peace that follows after the change; for the surface dance and glitter and not for the profound, calm light of the depth. But to some it will appeal, and its future is safe in their hands.

It were folly to attempt to quote from a book which is so much of one piece, tempered as this. But if human preferences and prejudices could yet intrude I would select the entire poem entitled *The Gift*—a poem I do not understand and which I feel I am not worthy to understand—as my own undoubted preference. Yet I have not space for this, so I must pick out instead one of those exquisite little flower-pieces, as an example of the art that H. D. has made her own.

The white violet  
Is scented on its stalk;  
The sea-violet  
Fragile as agate  
Lies fronting all the wind,  
Among the torn shells  
On the sand-bank.

The greater blue violets  
Flutter on the hill;  
But who would change for these,  
Who would change for these,  
One root of the white sort?

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*H. D.'s Vision*

Violet,  
Your grasp is frail  
On the edge of the sand-hill;  
But you catch the light—  
Frost a star edges with its fire.

*John Gould Fletcher*

WAR AND WOMANHOOD

*Harvest Moon*, by Josephine Preston Peabody. Houghton Mifflin Co.

This book contains, perhaps, the best work that Mrs. Marks has done. Her art, always delicate, responds to the experiences of life, so that each thought, as it comes, falls naturally and surely into its own medium, and the reader need have no concern with tools. What is the charm that we look for in each new book she brings out? It is not easy to define, although surely these are some of the things that make for it: the heart of a woman, of a mother, that is nevertheless always the heart of a child; subtlety, yet downrightness; an ear contending for the music of the line; power to seize and hold her vision, and an intuition embracing what has been and what may never be, in the world upon which she looks, in which she listens.

Mrs. Marks' work is elusive, never coarsely obvious. With her the tone of a little flute on the air may tell more vital truths than any martial crash of sound. I think that, notwithstanding denials that the war has developed poets, the time has come when we must claim that it has given the world a new poetic intake of breath. French poems from

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the trenches prove it, and now and then a rare English song has a strength of appeal which is an achievement. But no poet of war times except Mrs. Marks has given us a clear, full, rounded wreath of lights to send rays wherever woman bears heavily the burden of war; for war is now, as it has been throughout the ages, the burden of woman. In this book tenderly, understandingly, she gathers to her all woman-kind. She has the power, too, to enter the very soul of dumb animals, and look men through and through with their eyes.

We may linger over these poems singly; but they belong together. They tell us that there is a higher way of settling the world's disputes than by blood and steel, if men would only see. Here we have no longer the picture of a mother sending her son forth to battle with a "God bless you! Go!—fight for your country!" Very different is the mother of dead sons who pours out the bitterness of her heart to the harvest moon:

You will be laughing now, remembering  
We called you once Dead World, and barren thing.  
Yes, so we called you then—  
You, far more wise  
Than to give life to men.

In all of these poems, some of hope, some stern with purpose to show men a higher heritage than that of hate, not even the darkest shadow is without its gleam of faith—to be sought, perhaps, as radium in pitch-blend, but unquenchably alive.

There are poems we remember, and hail anew in book form. Who could forget *Woman-vigil*, done in sweeping

## War and Womanhood

Sapphics, with intervening short lines like sobs of children?  
and *Men Have Wings at Last?* and the lovely *Cradle Song?*

The following stanzas, from *Woman-vigil*, suggest the questioning of the modern woman, as this poet divines her:

What new pride, you of the ceaseless vigil,  
Knocks at your heart? Or what far folly of questing  
Stirs you now, between the loom and the cradle?—  
Woman unresting!

. . . . .

Mind of the moon is yours; her song and her strangeness:  
Singing, spinning—even as her earth-born daughters  
Spin and sing; yet laying her strong commandment  
Over the waters.

*(The echoes died  
Around the hour.  
Back flew the doves,  
Back to the tower.  
The house lay dark  
In sleep, within.  
The Shadow turned, to spin.)*

*Agnes Lee Freer*

### TRANSLATIONS

*The Epic Songs of Russia*, translated by Isabel F. Hapgood.  
Scribner's.

Has Russia ever created anything original? Turgeniev doubted it; he even suspected that Russia's claim to the invention of the samovar was unfounded. I think it was Brandes' remark that Russia's only originality consisted in her being the least original of all other countries. The most patriotic Russian will not deny that his is the arch-borrowing

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nation, but he will ascribe this feature to the inherent broadness of the Russian mind. That vast plain, open on all sides to foreign invasions, resembles a palm, invitingly outstretched to the universe in quest of new ideas; in Russia's political order, in her religion and art, you can trace the influences of all races and civilizations, from the Scandinavian-Germanic-Latin-Byzantine—in the occident, to the Hindu-Tartar-Persian-Chinese—in the orient. One must bear in mind one essential thing, however: all those various influences have become Russianized—i. e., intensified, broadened; in a word, universalized.

This universalism—or, if you wish, eclecticism—is most obviously evident in the Russian epic songs which are to this day sung by the illiterate inhabitants of the marshy provinces north of Petrograd. Russian folk-lore, orally transmitted from generation to generation (not until the middle of the nineteenth century were those songs put into writing), bears the stamp of European and Asiatic mythologies, and yet it is most characteristically Russian in its prevailing motives. The Norse sagas, transported by the Varangian princes in the ninth century, mingled with native Slavic and Finnish mythology, merged later with the Byzantine Christianity superimposed on the still vigorous local Paganism, absorbed various Asiatic motives imported by the Tartar hordes, and so forth. The fact that the Tartar invaders had held Russia for three centuries is accountable for a considerable Asiatic strain in the Russian genius. *Grattex le Russe. . .*

As I said, the motives of the epic songs are characteristically Russian. The earth, or more literally—the soil, is frequently anthropomorphized; the heroes (*bogatyř*—hero, and *polianitza*—heroine) possess the features of all Aryan folk-heroes plus the peculiarly Russian Hamletism, abandon, naïveté, and anarchic religiousness. An ordinary *bylina* (epic song) is trochaic with a dactylic ending, of five or six feet, which may be lengthened to seven or contracted to four; it is chanted to a simple, yet fugitive, recitative.

Miss Isabel F. Hapgood has conscientiously and lovingly translated some of the most characteristic *bylini* into excellent English prose. The first edition appeared in 1886; it is permissible to hope that the new edition, of 1916, will arouse more interest and appreciation than that of thirty years ago.

Alexander S. Kaun

*Songs of Ukraina, with Ruthenian Poems*, translated by Florence Randal Livesay. J. M. Dent & Sons, London, and E. P. Dutton & Co., New York.

POETRY has published many of these peasant songs, and we can only emphasize here their extreme beauty. Since *The Bard of the Dimbovitza*, over twenty years ago, first made us aware of the poetry hidden in the folk-lore of eastern Europe, our ears have been opened to this vibrant music, and Mrs. Livesay's book is one of the most intimate of all. Like the translators of that earlier collection, this Canadian poet has caught the feeling of the songs sung to her, in this case, by immigrants in Winnipeg; and she has been skilful enough to give the very pulse of it in many of her English versions.

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An introduction by Paul Crath and a note by the translator set the scene for these poems, which are grouped under *Cossack Songs*, *Wedding Songs*, *Robber Songs*, songs pagan, historical, etc., and simple *Folk Songs*. We should like to quote a number, but, as space is lacking, we must refer the reader to our files—or, better still, to the book. *H. M.*

*Women's Eyes*, by Arthur William Ryder. A. M. Robertson, San Francisco.

This is a quaint little volume of short classical Hindu poems, mostly by Bhartrihari, the greatest of Hindu lyricists. The translation is by William Arthur Ryder, professor of Sanskrit at the University of California, and is done with an engaging dry humor in unusually clean-cut English. A little book to buy and cherish.

The title poem is by King Bhartrihari, who "lived most royally" fifteen hundred years ago.

The world is full of women's eyes,  
Defiant, filled with shy surprise,  
Demure, a little overfree,  
Or simply sparkling roguishly;  
It seems a gorgeous lily-bed,  
Whichever way I turn my head.

*D. D.*

### NOTES

All but one of the poets represented in this number live, or have lived, in the wilder West of the United States or British Columbia. They have derived their interpretations of tribal folk-poetry either from direct contact with the tribes themselves, or from love of their art, their rhythms, and sympathy with their ideas.

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Dr. Frank S. Gordon, born in 1877 at Branchville, New Jersey, has lived much in our Southwest and in Mexico since his graduation from the medical college of New York University. He has begun only recently to write verse, being moved thereto chiefly, he says, by a study of aboriginal music. He writes of "the variety and freedom of Indian rhythm," and illustrates his poems with very beautiful and original decorative water-color drawings, whose motives, both of color and form, are derived from aboriginal art and from the stark growths of the desert.

Dr. Gordon, who now lives in Blairstown, New Jersey, has written also poems on Mexican motives, and lyric poems more or less interpretative of civilized life. But it seemed advisable that he should appear first with a group chosen entirely from the aboriginal poems. "I want to do my little bit," he writes, "for a vanishing and noble race."

In *The Tom-tom* an aged warrior is beating out once more the rhythms of his life—living over his loves, dreams, battles, and the tragedy of his race. *Tirawa* is the name of his deity. *Sa-a Narai* is a chant which aims "to reflect fairly accurately the Indian's outlook upon life," and which is "characteristic in its opening and close, and in its rhythm full of repetition."

Mrs. Mary Austin's work in prose places her among the most sympathetic interpreters of our western country, with its varied and picturesque life. She has published only one book in verse—*Fires* (University of Wisconsin Press), a play which has been given very effectively by amateurs out-of-doors in Madison, Wis., and Carmel, Cal.

Alice Corbin (Mrs. William P. Henderson), who has been from the first an associate editor of *POETRY*, is now staying for a time in New Mexico.

Miss Constance Lindsay Skinner has appeared several times in *POETRY* with poems on aboriginal motives. Her inspiration was derived in youth during much travel among the tribes of British Columbia.

The only exception to the wild-western quality of this number is Mr. Edward Eastaway, an English poet now in the trenches, whose appearance in *POETRY* had to be immediate, lest the next issue of *Georgian Verse* should have the honor of introducing him.

Mr. Travis Hoke, whose brief poems we printed last month, is no longer "a mystery" to the editor. In fact, he is revealed as associate editor of *The Dial* and still a resident of Chicago.

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### BOOKS RECEIVED

#### ORIGINAL VERSE:

- Songs Out of School*, by H. H. Bashford. Houghton Mifflin Co.  
*Sea Garden: Imagist Poems*, by "H. D." Houghton Mifflin Co.  
*Lace o' me Life*, by Ella Giles Ruddy. Privately printed.  
*From the Limbo of Forgotten Things*, by Mary Stuart Tyson. Sherman, French & Co.  
*Verses*, by Hillaire Belloc. Laurence Gomme, New York.  
*Ballads Patriotic and Romantic*, by Clinton Scollard. Laurence Gomme.  
*Chinese Lyrics*, by Pai Ta-shun. Charles Scribner's Sons.  
*Nine Poems From a Valetudinarium*, by Donald Evans. Nicholas L. Brown, Philadelphia.  
*Vie de Bordeaux*, by Pitts Sanborn. Nicholas L. Brown.  
*The Singer*, by J. T. Gorham Press.  
*Mystery, or The Lady of the Casino*, by David F. Taylor. Gorham Press.  
*Pilgrimage*, by Eric Shepherd. Longmans, Green & Co., London.  
*City Dust*, by Jane Burr. Frank Shay, New York.  
*Contacts*, by T. W. Earp. B. H. Blackwell, Oxford, Eng.  
*Bohemian Glass*, by E. L. Duff. B. H. Blackwell.  
*Thursday's Child*, by E. Rendall. B. H. Blackwell.  
*The Omega*, by Edward Shillito. B. H. Blackwell.  
*The Jig of Forslin*, by Conrad Aiken. Four Seas Co., Boston.  
*Thoughts from Oregon to Greet a Friend*, by Kathleen MacNeal Durham. Privately printed.  
*Irish Mag*, by Earl Wayland Bowman. Privately printed.  
*The Blood of Rachel and Other Poems*, by Cotton Noe. John P. Morton & Co., Louisville, Ky.  
*Miscellaneous Poems*, by Michael Strange. Mitchell Kennerley.  
*Rhymes*—Vol. II, by John Halifax. Privately printed.  
*Verses*, by Mary Wright Plummer. Privately printed.  
*Rune and Rann*, by George M. P. Baird. Aldine Press, Pittsburgh.  
*When Little Thoughts Go Rhyming*, by Elizabeth Knobel. Rand McNally & Co., Chicago.  
*Sonnets: 1915-1916*, by Wheaton Hale Brewer. Privately printed.  
*Livelihood*, by Wilfrid Wilson Gibson. Macmillan Co.  
*Sonnets of Protest*, by Isabelle Howe Fiske. Privately printed.  
*Minnesota*, by Ambrose Leo McGreevy. Jones & Kroeger, Winona, Minn.



MARCH, 1917

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CITY PASTORALS

POEM TO BE DANCED



AN a poem say my heart  
While I stand still apart?  
I myself would be the song,  
I myself would be the rhyme,  
Moving delicately along;  
And my steps would make the time,  
And the stanzas be my rest.

What can I say with the words of my lips?  
Oh, let me speak from my toes' tips  
Of my treasure and zest!

Dancing, I can tell every sweet—  
Slow and soft, soft and fleet.  
Dancing, I can tell every ill,  
All my inmost wish fulfil;  
All my sorrowing I can heal.

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Oh, to reveal  
With the bending of my head,  
With the curving of my hand,  
What no poem has ever said,  
What no words could understand!  
Things for a book too sad, too gay,  
The verses of my feet would say;  
Telling sorrow, telling delight  
Into the very marrow of men's sight.

### UNDER THE TREE

I have found a seat  
At the foot of a tree,  
All complete,  
Made for me.  
Smelling sweet  
With the needles of pine.  
I sit very fine  
In the hollow here  
Of my root-woven chair.

### THE DANCER

Why are you gay, little tree,  
That you dance on the hillside?—  
Holding out your delicate skirt,

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## *The Dancer*

Holding out your delicate fingers,  
Tilting your little head when the wind comes blowing.

Softly,  
Suddenly,  
You will shake your twinkling locks,  
You will leap and skip, little tree,  
Tree on the hillside—  
Lightly,  
And twirl yourself away.

### TO A VINE THE WORKMEN CUT DOWN

How will your greenness stay  
Now your roots are cut away?  
The little tendrils that climbed so high,  
The little green leaves still fluttering in the sun,  
Will shrivel and wither to dust when your sap is dry.  
Your pleasant days are done.

Oh, you turned these bricks into a happy place,  
Dancing and growing;  
Dancing and throwing  
The dancing grace  
Of your shadows over the wall  
When the winds made your little leaves stir.  
When your shade was full of the call  
And nesting of birds, you were happy hearing the whir  
Of their wings.

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## POETRY: *A Magazine of Verse*

Oh, wings and summer days  
Will miss you; and men, whose treeless ways  
You gladdened in the dusty town.  
I wish that we could keep your pleasant sheen;  
I wish you need not fade and be cut down.  
But buildings are more worth than vines, you know,  
Old vine. Forgive this wasting of your precious green:  
Forgive us that we had to let you go!

### ARCHES

Under the high-arching bridge  
The shadow arch  
Bends itself,  
Curved  
Down into the water;  
And lies in the water  
As motionless  
As the arch above it is motionless:  
Masonry of the dusk.

### CONTINUANCE

What will you find  
In the depths of the wind—  
What does it hold?  
Fold on fold on flowing fold  
Clasp it, and your fingers press

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## *Continuance*

Only a soft emptiness ;  
Only air is in your hand.  
Yet this nothing may command  
The purposes of men and seas,  
Ordering them with a mighty ease ;  
With that same, that ancient power  
That was born in time's first hour,  
In the beginning of change and days.  
But never its strength delays  
Or grows old, or will weary or rest ;  
Nor the years diminish its wild invisible zest.

### SKY-HUMOR

How many and many  
Since the world began  
Have sung of your beauty,  
Moon!—  
Since the world began.  
And now tonight  
We call you ours,  
Saying that your beauty belongs to us,  
Dreaming that only ourselves  
Have known your mystery.

Sometimes,  
Under the hiding of the clouds,  
Do you smile,  
And laugh to yourself

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At these people of the earth  
And their imaginings?

Oh, but do not laugh at us unkindly,  
Moon!  
Remember how little time we live—  
And you live so long!

THE LETTER

The words were beautiful,  
Before I had read them.

I laid my fingers along the edges,  
Over the fold your hands had folded—  
I laid my face to the face of my letter.

Softly came down and closed in about me  
A solitude,  
A separate world;  
In which was no sound or motion or being,  
Only the whispering of the paper  
Stirring to life in my brain.

All day I carried it  
Against me,  
Like a bird;  
Against my heart where my life is,  
Like a secret waiting in my heart,  
Singing.

**KIN**

Do you also know it,  
Did you catch the beam?  
Have you felt the fire,  
Has your day the dream?  
Did you drink as I did?  
Was it long ago?  
Does your memory of it  
Burn and glow?  
Do you wait its coming,  
Wish it back again?  
Have you known the rapture?  
Known the pain?

**HEY NONINO**

I will put on my gay dress,  
My corals and locket;  
On my hair a blue ribbon,  
And my softest shoes.  
I will go and dance  
Where the mirror will show me;  
I will go and dance  
And turn myself and courtesy—  
(Oh, the mirror will be glad!)—  
And courtesy way way down,

## POETRY: *A Magazine of Verse*

Spreading out my dress  
To watch how it looks,  
Spreading out my gay dress over the floor.

### MEN-FOLKS

When I look at men, sometimes—  
I can hardly tell how it is—  
But when I see them,  
Walking about,  
Doing things,  
Talking and planning,  
So busy, so serious—  
(Only children could be,  
Only children,  
So serious!)—  
A feeling comes over me as if I were God,  
And looked forth from a great distance  
On all the humanness of the earth,  
Compassionately.

*Helen Hoyt*



## COUNTRY RHYMES

### OLD YOUTH

There's nothing very beautiful and nothing very gay  
About the rush of faces in the town by day,  
But a light tan cow in a pale green mead,  
That is very beautiful, beautiful indeed. . .  
And the soft March wind, and the low March mist  
Are better than kisses in the dark street kissed. . .  
The fragrance of the forest when it wakes at dawn,  
The fragrance of a trim green village lawn,  
The hearing of the murmur of the rain at play—  
These things are beautiful, beautiful as day!  
And I shan't stand waiting for love or scorn  
When the feast is laid for a day new-born. . .  
Oh, better let the little things I loved when little  
Return when the heart finds the great things brittle;  
And better is a temple made of bark and thong  
Than a tall stone temple that may stand too long.

### THE DOOR

Love is a proud and gentle thing, a better thing to own  
Than all of the wide impossible stars over the heavens blown,  
And the little gifts her hand gives are careless given or taken,

## POETRY: *A Magazine of Verse*

And though the whole great world break, the heart of her  
is not shaken. . .

Love is a viol in the wind, a viol never stilled,  
And mine of all is the surest that ever God has willed;  
I shall speak to her though she goes before me into the grave,  
And though I drown in the sea, herself shall come upon a  
wave;

And the things that love gives after shall be as they were  
before,

For life is only a small house and love is an open door.

### THE TREE TOAD

A tiny bell the tree toad has,  
I wonder if he knows  
The charm it is to hear him  
Ringing as he goes.

He can't have gone the journeys  
He tells me to go on,  
Here in the darkness  
Of the cool, cropped lawn.

He cannot know the thrill  
Of the soft spring wind,  
Or the wonder, when you walk,  
What will come behind.

## *The Tree Toad*

He hasn't seen the places  
I'd break my heart to win,  
Nor heard the city calling  
When the cold comes in.

He sings away contented,  
And doesn't leave his tree,  
But he sets my blood a-going  
Where his song will never be.

### THE HORNS OF PEACE

No man's life is open as the houses  
Blindly he will build, houses of a dream;  
Where many maids are running, clad in leather blouses,  
Running with white legs into a stream.

Blow, blow the horns, clearer in the morning!  
Never let the world hear, though the music wake  
Leaves on the ash-tree and rose set thorning;  
Let speech be over and no woman bake.

The ash-limbs are burdenless, the rose stands idle,  
A-tremble with the horns blowing far and sweet;  
And even an old man will dream of a bridal,  
Seeing what he was when love was in his feet.

**POETRY: *A Magazine of Verse***

Blow, blow the horns, farther growing clearer!

I have seen my life and love as a cloud

A star will thrust a face through coming nearer. . .

Never let the world hear a glad song aloud!

**DILEMMA**

What though the moon should come

With a blinding glow,

And the stars have a game

On the wood's edge. . .

A man would have to still

Cut and weed and sow,

And lay a white line

When he plants a hedge.

What though God

With a great sound of rain

Came to talk of violets

And things people do. . .

I would have to labor

And dig with my brain

Still to get a truth

Out of all words new.

*Orrick Johns*

## A BLUE VALENTINE

*For Aline*

Monsignore,  
Right Reverend Bishop Valentinus,  
Sometime of Interamna, which is called Ferni,  
Now of the delightful Court of Heaven,  
I respectfully salute you,  
I genuflect  
And I kiss your episcopal ring.

It is not, Monsignore,  
The fragrant memory of your holy life,  
Nor that of your shining and joyous martyrdom,  
Which causes me now to address you.  
But since this is your august festival, Monsignore,  
It seems appropriate to me to state  
According to a venerable and agreeable custom,  
That I love a beautiful lady.  
Her eyes, Monsignore,  
Are so blue that they put lovely little blue reflections  
On everything that she looks at,  
Such as a wall  
Or the moon  
Or my heart.  
It is like the light coming through blue stained glass,  
Yet not quite like it  
For the blueness is not transparent,  
Only translucent.

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Her soul's light shines through,  
But her soul cannot be seen.  
It is something elusive, whimsical, tender, wanton, infantile,  
wise  
And noble.  
She wears, Monsignore, a blue garment,  
Made in the manner of the Japanese.  
It is very blue—  
I think that her eyes have made it more blue,  
Sweetly staining it  
As the pressure of her body has graciously given it form.  
Loving her, Monsignore,  
I love all her attributes;  
But I believe  
That even if I did not love her  
I should love the blueness of her eyes,  
And her blue garment, made in the manner of the Japanese.

Monsignore,  
I have never before troubled you with a request.  
The saints whose ears I chiefly worry with my pleas are the  
most exquisite and maternal Brigid,  
Gallant Saint Stephen, who puts fire in my blood,  
And your brother bishop, my patron,  
The generous and jovial Saint Nicholas of Bari.  
But, of your courtesy, Monsignore,  
Do me this favor:  
When you this morning make your way

### *A Blue Valentine*

To the Ivory Throne that bursts into bloom with roses be-  
cause of her who sits upon it,  
When you come to pay your devoir to Our Lady,  
I beg you, say to her:  
"Madame, a poor poet, one of your singing servants yet on  
earth,  
Has asked me to say that at this moment he is especially  
grateful to you  
For wearing a blue gown."

### THE THORN

The garden of God is a radiant place  
And every flower has a holy face.  
Our Lady like a lily bends above the cloudy sod,  
But Saint Michael is the thorn on the rose-bush of God.

David is the song upon God's lips,  
And Our Lady is the goblet that He sips,  
And Gabriel's the breath of His command;  
But Saint Michael is the sword in God's right hand.

The Ivory Tower is fair to see,  
And may her walls encompass me!  
But when the Devil comes with the thunder of his might,  
Saint Michael, show me how to fight!

*Joyce Kilmer*

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A NUN

One glance, and I had lost her in the riot  
Of tangled cries.  
She trod the clamor with a cloistral quiet  
Deep in her eyes,  
As though she heard the muted music only  
That silence makes  
Among dim mountain summits and on lonely  
Deserted lakes.

There is some broken song her heart remembers  
From long ago;  
Some love lies buried deep, some passion's embers  
Smothered in snow.  
Far voices of a joy that sought and missed her  
Fail now, and cease. . . .  
And this has given the deep eyes of God's sister  
Their dreadful peace.

*Odell Shepard*



## WHAT THE ORDERLY DOG SAW

*A Winter Landscape*

*To Mrs. Percy Jackson*

The seven white peacocks against the castle wall  
In the high trees and the dusk are like tapestry;  
The sky being orange, the high wall a purple barrier,  
The canal dead silver in the dusk:

And you are far away.

Yet I see infinite miles of mountains,  
Little lights shining in rows in the dark of them—  
Infinite miles of marshes;  
Thin wisps of mist, shimmering like blue webs  
Over the dusk of them.

Great curves and horns of sea,  
And dusk and dusk, and the little village;  
And you, sitting in the firelight.

## II

Around me are the two hundred and forty men of B Com-  
pany,  
Mud-colored;  
Going about their avocations,  
Resting between their practice of the art  
Of killing men;  
As I too rest between my practice  
Of the art of killing men.

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Their pipes glow over the mud and their mud-color, moving  
like fireflies beneath the trees—  
I too being mud-colored—  
Beneath the trees and the peacocks.  
When they come up to me in the dusk  
They start, stiffen and salute, almost invisibly.  
And the forty-two prisoners from the battalion guard-room  
Crouch over the tea-cans in the shadow of the wall.  
And the bread hunks glimmer, beneath the peacocks—  
And you are far away.

### III

Presently I shall go in.  
I shall write down the names of the forty-two  
Prisoners in the battalion guard-room  
On fair white foolscap:  
Their names, rank and regimental numbers;  
Corps, Companies, Punishments and Offences,  
Remarks, and By whom confined.  
Yet in spite of all I shall see only  
The infinite miles of dark mountain,  
The infinite miles of dark marshland,  
Great curves and horns of sea,  
The little village;  
And you,  
Sitting in the firelight.

*Ford Madox Hueffer*

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## WHAT THE CIVILIAN SAW

### *Kensington High Street*

It is all shiny and black, like bombazine or taffeta,  
Or the satin of my grandmother's gown, that stood alone  
It was so thick;  
A screen between us and knowledge,  
That sometimes, when we are very good, gets on to the  
placards.

Past the screen of the dark the rain glissades,  
Flowing down the straight damp palisades of the dark.

Faces against the screen,  
Lamps of living flesh hung out in the storm  
That has draped the world in black. . . .  
Here by the station an iridescent sheen,  
Dazzling, not gay. And news,  
Special; oh, "Special"!  
What have they let through to us from over there—  
For once?

Faces, news, on the screen,  
And the hungry crowds weltering in the dark!  
Here is the English translation  
Of what goes on over there,  
There where hangings are not black but red,  
And the king of England is lying on the ground. . . . .

*Violet Hunt Hueffer*

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WINDS OF MARCH

*The bare boughs are alive within,  
And the young buds are trembling and curious.*

"NEWLY SEEDED"

It's for you, little bird, of course,  
This sign is meant;  
For you burrowing with your beak,  
And shaking up sprays of dust.

Do you not know  
How the earth held each yellow shining speck  
Close to itself, feeding it, breathing on it;  
And from each rain-drop  
Picked out the winy pearl  
For it to drink?

Hop away, little one; go find you a worm,  
Which with its sleek body, alive, has rubbed  
Against wet earth,  
Has tasted the sunlight and the warmth;  
Or some buzzing one with wings,  
Drunk with the sun, whose breath  
Blows it up today  
And will blow it out tomorrow.

## *Night Moods*

### NIGHT MOODS

#### I

I am in your thin dark waters, night.

They reach up.

I splash and flounder.

I drown.

The waves separate, make way.

They touch playfully my shoulders.

They whisper gently.

#### II

The earth is melted.

I am vapor—

A wave of the waves.

I will rise with the wind.

The hunger of my heart

Is now a dusky hillock of vapor.

Night has blown

Her breath.

### ON A WINDY AFTERNOON

Yesterday afternoon, on a short-cropped lawn,  
I saw the feet of the wind which I have read of in books;  
And it was like the glimpse of a woman's bare feet  
Hidden quickly.

## POETRY: *A Magazine of Verse*

### OFF

God,  
Over our ugly buildings  
Why did you bend out  
Your beautiful ravishing sky?  
Take it off!—  
Let them jag  
The emptiness.

### FIRE

You contain more  
Than the red and the purple and the orange  
Which I see:  
If I dared to tear you to shreds with my hands  
I would find that you contain also water,  
And ice, and even blackish-brown earth,  
To make beautiful things with.

### KNOWLEDGE

The craving of my body has been conquered.  
It no longer deceives my thoughts,  
Or colors them.  
Knowledge purer than flame  
Is in me, consuming me.

## *The Adversary*

### THE ADVERSARY

Coiled around you is he—  
A little blacker than a shadow.

Before my lips reach yours  
I have to push him from them.  
That's why my kisses  
Are so gentle.

He is also coiled around me.  
Do you feel his scales as I?  
Perhaps that's why we kiss at all—  
I know so little.

### A POLISH GIRL

You carry the dishes in your hands  
But your thoughts are elsewhere:

As if you inwardly knew  
That in your kisses is the glow  
Of Sobietsky and the heroes;

That your body has the pungent taste  
Which the willow-tree and the rose  
Perhaps feel in the soil;

And that your hair carries the fragrance  
Of the willow and the rose itself.

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### PORTRAIT

*To H. M.*

A small tree  
Always surrounded by mist,  
More often dark but sometimes light—  
Very light, almost made of light.  
Yet even then between the branches  
There is shadow, a wavering gloom.

### GONE

It was as though sunshine  
Had been thickened  
To a human form.

You have left traces  
Of rose and orange  
On the afternoon.

### PLAYING HORSE

Mount, little one.  
The horse trots back and forth.  
Time is harder than water.  
Nights, days, hours,  
Shine

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*Playing Horse*

Like pools of light.  
Where were you, child?

The horse stumbles,  
Little one.

TRAVELER

Miles and miles you traveled.

A wise brown bear  
Rode you on his back;  
Then a bird hopped along  
Or flew in front and explained;  
And a stone sent a bearded one  
With a book.

In your small warm nest you heard  
Bells rung delicately; and strange calls.

We built you a little house.  
We hung up a sun and a moon,  
And stars like apples.  
The walls we painted red and blue.  
We spread out carpets of Bagdad.  
And three glasses with sweet wine  
We stood in a corner.

*Max Michelson*

## POETRY: *A Magazine of Verse*

### LACQUER PRINTS

#### STREETS

*Adapted from the poet Yakura Sanjin, 1769*

As I wandered through the eight hundred and eight streets  
of the city,  
I saw nothing so beautiful  
As the Women of the Green Houses,  
With their girdles of spun gold,  
And their long-sleeved dresses,  
Colored like the graining of wood.  
As they walk,  
The hems of their outer garments flutter open,  
And the blood-red linings glow like sharp-toothed maple  
leaves  
In autumn.

#### DESOLATION

Under the plum-blossoms are nightingales;  
But the sea is hidden in an egg-white mist,  
And they are silent.

#### SUNSHINE

The pool is edged with the blade-like leaves of irises.  
If I throw a stone into the placid water,  
It suddenly stiffens

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*Sunshine*

Into rings and rings  
Of sharp gold wire.

ILLUSION

Walking beside the tree-peonies,  
I saw a beetle  
Whose wings were of black lacquer spotted with milk.  
I would have caught it,  
But it ran from me swiftly  
And hid under the stone lotus  
Which supports the Statue of Buddha.

A YEAR PASSES

Beyond the porcelain fence of the pleasure garden,  
I hear the frogs in the blue-green rice-fields;  
But the sword-shaped moon  
Has cut my heart in two.

A LOVER

If I could catch the green lantern of the firefly  
I could see to write you a letter.

TO A HUSBAND

Brighter than fireflies upon the Uji River  
Are your words in the dark, Beloved.

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### FROM CHINA

I thought:  
The moon,  
Shining upon the many steps of the palace before me,  
Shines also upon the chequered rice-fields  
Of my native land.  
And my tears fell  
Like white rice grains  
At my feet.

### AUTUMN

All day long I have watched the purple vine-leaves  
Fall into the water.  
And now in the moonlight they still fall,  
But each leaf is fringed with silver.

### EPHEMERA

Silver-green lanterns tossing among windy branches:  
So an old man thinks  
Of the loves of his youth.

### DOCUMENT

The great painter, Hokusai,  
In his old age,  
Wrote these words:

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*Document*

"Profiting by a beautiful spring day,  
In this year of tranquillity,  
To warm myself in the sun,  
I received a visit from my publisher  
Who asked me to do something for him.  
Then I reflected that one should not forget the glory of  
arms,  
Above all when one was living in peace;  
And in spite of my age,  
Which is more than seventy years,  
I have found courage to draw those ancient heroes  
Who have been the models of glory."

THE EMPEROR'S GARDEN

Once, in the sultry heats of midsummer,  
An emperor caused the miniature mountains in his garden  
To be covered with white silk,  
That so crowned  
They might cool his eyes  
With the sparkle of snow.

ONE OF THE "HUNDRED VIEWS OF FUJI," BY HOKUSAI

Being thirsty,  
I filled a cup with water,  
And, behold!—Fuji-yama lay upon the water,  
Like a dropped leaf!

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### DISILLUSION

A scholar,  
Weary of erecting the fragile towers of words,  
Went on a pilgrimage to Asama-Yama;  
And seeing the force of the fire  
Spouting from this mighty mountain,  
Hurled himself into its crater  
And perished.

### PAPER FISHES

The paper carp,  
At the end of its long bamboo pole,  
Takes the wind into its mouth  
And emits it at its tail.  
So is man,  
Forever swallowing the wind.

### MEDITATION

A wise man,  
Watching the stars pass across the sky,  
Remarked:  
In the upper air the fireflies move more slowly.

### THE CAMELLIA TREE OF MATSUE

At Matsue  
There was a Camellia Tree of great beauty

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*The Camellia Tree of Matsue*

Whose blossoms were white as honey wax  
Splashed and streaked with the pink of fair coral.  
At night  
When the moon rose in the sky,  
The Camellia Tree would leave its place  
By the gateway,  
And wander up and down the garden,  
Trailing its roots behind it  
Like a train of rustling silk.  
The people in the house,  
Hearing the scrape of them upon the gravel,  
Looked out into the garden  
And saw the tree,  
With its flowers erect and peering,  
Pressed against the shojii.  
Many nights the tree walked about the garden,  
Until the women and children  
Became frightened,  
And the Master of the house  
Ordered that the tree be cut down.  
But when the gardener brought his axe  
And struck at the trunk of the tree,  
There spouted forth a stream of dark blood;  
And when the stump was torn up,  
The hole quivered like an open wound.

*Amy Lowell*

# POETRY: *A Magazine of Verse*

## EDITORIAL COMMENT

### HARD TIMES INDEED



IN THE *Contributors' Club* of a recent *Atlantic* are some anonymous reflections upon *Poets' Hard Times*, reflections which sum up a familiar point of view about poets and poetry with convenient compactness. A few excerpts will present the gist of the argument:

These are hard times for the honest minor poet: not because, as Mr. George Moore adventurously asserts, art is dead under the curse of universal locomotion, nor because the singer is denied a just hearing by the public. . . .

The honest minor poet wakes up in these days to find himself a child in a world of energetic, serious maturity. Even the daily headlines bring home to him that no one needs his songs of hills and leaves and clouds, of elfin things and gypsy feet, even of love and death, touched as they are in his music with the kind, deceiving shimmer of dreams. . . .

With the nations reeling like drunken regiments, . . . it is no wonder that the little singer finds himself beaten into humble silence. If he is honest, he knows that the world needs the burning insight and power of a prophet, or the simplicity of eternal child-like Truth. If he is not great enough in complexity to attain the one, nor great enough in simplicity for the other, he has nothing to say. His stars and brooks will stand the test only if somehow he can weave them into the vast troubled web of human experience. Pale pools, white birds, green fishes, blue gardens, are truly the playthings of an artistic moment; and 'all the little emptiness of love' is like a rose blown down the wind, unless he can give it the substance of life more mightily than any sweet-chiming words alone can do. Poetry cannot dabble in strange forms, nor try to spice itself to vitality with new labels for old devices. Now, more than ever, poetry must speak for itself.

It is because of this high necessity that the singer is cast back into silence. He is like a young person in a house of tumult and sorrow. He yearns to help, but he is dumb before the terrible or noble facts about him. If he utters himself, he is aware of in-



## *Hard Times Indeed*

adequacy, and expects to be brushed aside. Even if sometimes he feels sure that his dream-knowledge sees deeper than the darkened eyes of his friends, he dares not insist, till Time has given him the right to be heard. He must grow up before he can speak. . . . Or, to put it more plainly, he must be great to be worth hearing. When he can never be great, nothing is left for him but silence, and wonder. He may always keep the wonder. . . .

His courageous silence will leave more sky-room for the great songs sure to come. His wonder will open to him some private port of Paradise, gleaming with the proud light of Truth.

This kind of talk is still heard in more or less authoritative places, although, like the phrase "minor poet," it is somewhat out of fashion. I am not convinced of the heroism of that self-abnegating might-be bard, who is "cast back into silence" by "high necessity," struck "dumb before the terrible and noble facts about him." Were Coleridge, Keats, Shelley—many others—struck dumb by the terrible and noble facts of the Napoleonic wars?—yet these singers of "clouds and leaves and elfin things" were minor poets to their contemporaries. Did any one of them hush his "sweet-chiming words" to "leave more room for the great songs sure to come?" No, for he knew that the great song, the great work of art, is merely the highest tree of a forest, rarely an isolated miracle.

Let us get down to brass tacks. This being a strenuous age, of universal locomotion, war and other bedevilments, the world has no use, we are told, for the poet unless he is an Isaiah or a Hans Christian Anderson. One might as well say the world has no use for gardens, or dwellings, or symphonies, for sculptured friezes and monuments, for portraits and landscapes, for Venetian glass or Chinese rugs, for jewels

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and laces, for club-houses and art museums. Because my favorite painter is not moved to depict cosmic horrors like Verestchagin, shall I bid him burn his brushes and take to brooding in a corner? Because the mad world is at war, shall no one play the piano, or plan a fair house, or dream by a sculptured fountain under the tree? Or, Mr. Essayist, "because thou art virtuous, shall there be no more cakes and ale?"

The poet, in any primitive society or any well-organized civilization, should be as much a matter-of-course as the carpenter. No tribe, no city, is complete without one, and the better he is the more effectually does he complete it. But for any community to demand the ultimate perfection of its poet, to expect him to be silent unless he can speak, like Moses, from Mount Sinai, is as absurd as it would be to forbid to a carpenter his tools unless he can at once, though unpracticed and unappreciated, turn out Chippendale chairs.

Some reader may retort with another familiar sentiment—"the true poet can't be silenced." But the trouble is, he *can* be silenced—by starvation of body or soul, song-deafness of his generation, or other obstructions; and there is nothing more dangerous, more bitter and perverted perhaps, than a silenced poet. If "no one needs his songs," his "wonder," far from leading him to "some private port of Paradise," usually ends in toxic decay or some violent explosion, like other suppressed forces.

But in a more profound sense the essayist's point of view is piteously wrong-headed, and piteously typical of much

## *Hard Times Indeed*

wrong-headedness at the present hour. In such platitudes indeed, such tawdry thinking, lies the cause of this cosmic tragedy of nations; and every poet who sings of brooks and clouds, of elfin beauty, of love and death, thereby utters his heroic protest, helps to remind us of eternal truth. Are we to believe, forsooth, that this is "a world of energetic, serious maturity"—because men are riding in steamers and motor-cars, and building sky-scrapers, and killing each other by millions at the call of rotten dynasties and ideas? Forever and forever no! It is a world of overgrown children playing with expensive and explosive toys, of children who make friends across the world, and then madly mow each other down in a quarrel not their own, which would make any wise man laugh but for his bitter tears of pity. So hot with youth is the world that its soul—the common feeling of the crowd—is drawing our own reluctant nation into this furious game with a force that even the most illumined leader, though mature far beyond the people, would be unable to resist; even as the illumined Lincoln was compelled in his day to respond to the immediate call, and drive the dogs of war.

If the world ever grows up into "energetic, serious maturity," it will be because the common feeling of the crowd arrives at wisdom. And wisdom is now, as it ever has been, insight into the eternal verities of truth and beauty. Every artist who helps the world to see truth and beauty—be it merely by a pastel landscape, or a carved kitten, or a song to a butterfly's wing, "does his bit" toward reminding us of eternal verities, and thereby bringing the world nearer to

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"serious maturity." He is an advance agent of civilization, that higher civilization which means wisdom, forbearance, humor, joy in life and magnanimity in death. H. M.

### THINGS TO BE DONE

*Transportation is civilization.—Rudyard Kipling*

First, *we should get the tariff off books.* The work of the American Free Trade League may be purely "economic and political"; it is outside the scope of our activities. But a protective tariff on books is an obstacle to the free circulation of thought and *must* be done away with. "Transportation is civilization": that phrase is the most profound that Mr. Kipling has ever written. But the free circulation of thought is the very core and pulse of the matter.

The United States has a new law which permits and even fosters the importation of contemporary painting and sculpture. Is it anything but sloth and ignorance that leaves literature in worse condition than these other arts?

Second, *we should get a good copyright law.* The present law, framed in the interest of a few local mechanics, is also an obstacle to the free circulation of thought. Is there any reason why the United States should lag behind other countries in a matter of this sort?

Third, *let us learn more languages—let more people learn more languages.* The man who reads only one language is, intellectually, only half a man in comparison with the man of equal mental energy who can read two with comfort. All things are not written in one tongue.

## *Things to Be Done*

Fourth, *we should multiply translations.* It is not every-one who has time to learn ten languages, or even two. Competition is of value even in matters of art and intelligence. The better the stock in the store, the more chance of finding what you need. We need more translations of French authors, not only contemporary but eighteenth-century authors. We need translations of German and Russian authors, many more than we get.

We need standards of comparison. All excellence has not risen out of one ant-hill. America is full of provincial people, who do not know that they are provincial, who are insulted if one calls them provincial; even though they have never stopped to inquire whether there are peculiar functions appertaining to provincials, and particular opportunities afforded by the very fact of provincialism, or whether it is a flaw to be, perhaps in part, overcome.

Fifth, *we must try to think, at least a little, about civilization, centralization* and its possible functions, the differentiation of individuals, and the function, advantage or disadvantage of such differentiation.

We should read De Gourmont, De Goncourt. We should not assume that Christ knew more than Confucius *until we have read Confucius.* We should mistrust the local parson and the local professor, remembering that lots of people, not so long ago, were brought up to believe in Carlyle and Macaulay. Nor should we assume that Darwin said the last word, or that Christianity is the religion of all the world, or that what we call Christianity would

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have been recognized as such by most of our ancestors. Codes, etiquettes and moralities have wavered and varied. Irony is still set down as a "sin" in manuals of devotion. The last heretic was burnt at the stake in 1758. We are not yet out of the forest.

It is necessary that the art of poetry should retain *all* its liberties. The poet must be free to recognize the existence of ideas, whatever they are and wherever he finds them.

### *Questions for Meditation*

Is America still a colony? intellectually? in all ways save in her political organization?

Is she self-sufficient?

What is the value of a metropolis? of several?

Is America importing art? and exporting artists?

Does she export "artists", or merely promising embryos which hatch into artists elsewhere?

Does America want foreign books?

Does she originate? or does she merely multiply and dilute?

Is she bigoted? Is her bigotry a danger to the arts?

To what extent does she fear discovery and discoveries?

Is she mistrustful of invention simply because she has no critical sense? no standards whereby to measure achievement? Is this the reason for "booms" and for so many people of "promise" "petering out"?

How many of her authors consider quantity preferable to intensity?

E. P.

## REVIEWS

### YALE DISCOVERS BLAKE

*Selections from the Symbolical Poems of William Blake*, edited, with an *Introduction*, by Fred. E. Pierce, Ph. D. Yale Univ. Press.

It is interesting to note that professors, pedants, and other critical persons are discovering that Blake was after all not so mad as his contemporaries thought, and that they have even taken to patronizing him in consequence. The moral is, that if a man of genius only waits long enough he will be sure of some recognition.

Blake's recognition as a poet has been slow in arriving, because he is too much of the spiritual aristocrat for America, and too much of the imaginative man for England. In England there are still persons who think Blake mad, such as Mr. Comyns Carr and Mr. G. K. Chesterton. Mr. Chesterton's small book on the subject may be disregarded. He considers Blake mad for the simple reason that he did not hold the same opinions as his own. In fact, Mr. Chesterton declares that Blake was mad because he was logical, whereas Chesterton is not. Everyone in England is mad, according to Mr. Chesterton, except Mr. Shaw and himself; and Mr. Shaw is mad because he is totally illogical, whereas Mr. Chesterton is logical or not, just as it suits him to be.

This, however, is a digression. Blake was a genius, and Mr. Chesterton is a journalist. Blake's "madness" was perfectly reasonable, and extremely simple at bottom. He

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believed that man was at one time perfect, but that he had fallen into imperfection and error because he preferred to exalt certain qualities over certain others, instead of living in eternity, as Blake called it (or as Spinoza might have called it, seeing all things *sub specie æternitatis*). Thus Albion, the perfect man, first exalted his emotions over his intellect. Then his rebellious instincts got the better of the emotional judgments of his intellect, now hopelessly sentimentalized. Then his merely animal instinct for existence conquered all three, until at last his intellect, divorced utterly from all contact with reality, rebelled against the animal instinct in turn, and went out alone in a world of stony horror and of darkness—a charnel-house of materialism, to make laws for that world. All this is plain, and still plainer is Blake's intention when we grasp that he personalized these successive states under the figures of Urizen, Luvah, Urthona, and Tharmas, and their female counterparts. Thus Blake explained the story of the world under the guise of a myth.

But this is not all. Blake, like many other philosophers (William James, for example, and Spinoza), sought for a release from this endless circle of non-entity. He found it in three things: first, in the teaching of Jesus, whereby mankind is delivered from the charnel-pit of pessimism and negation through pity and forgiveness; second, in the doctrine of the Divine Right of Man, as taught in the French Revolution; third, in the endless creation of a world of Art, to set in opposition to the real world; a fortress-city which each



man could build for himself, and where he could be "lord and master in his own house."

Now, this is not madness. It is a philosophic system, as valuable as any other, and whose grandeur is unquestioned. Blake, however, knew that philosophic explanations of the universe are of no value unless tested. So he tested his by living it. He became God as far as possible. Socrates and he were brothers, and had talks together; and not only Socrates but Jesus Christ and the angels, and even God Himself, "spoke" to him through the imagination and were seen by him through "the mind's eye."

Madness? No. Had Blake been really mad, he would have declared that such vision was given to him alone, and not to other men. But Blake insisted, as Whitman insisted, that "what is true of me is every bit as true of you." So to every man is given the Divine Power and Imagination, and Blake spent his whole life urging others to use them. Is there any spectacle more sublime than that of this poor man, sneered and jeered at, painting and writing his visions all his life long, that others might share them? "I have never seen his hands idle, except when he was sleeping" said his wife after his death.

So far Blake's doctrine is all of one piece. Why is it then, that in his *Prophetic Books*, in which he gave this doctrine to the world, we get not only confusion but contradiction? It is because a scheme so vast as his was, is utterly unrealizable by any one man. Our desires and imaginations may be infinite, but the machinery of our bodies, our

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"vegetable existence," as Blake would have called it, is limited, perhaps wisely; and so all our desires cannot be achieved. Were it otherwise, we would wear eternity as a garment, and we would have no further need for the material world, or for human existence. Yet Blake might have made his work more perfect, from a literary point of view, had he been a man to whom literature was the chief form of expression. But we know it was not. Blake was primarily an artist, a painter, and he lacked both the training, the time, and the inclination to weld the confused elements of his *Prophetic Books* into one great epic. We must take him, therefore, as an unequal poet, who planned a sublime structure, but who was unable through poverty, lack of education, necessity of winning his bread, and temperamental inclination towards another art, to entirely fulfill his plans.

Nevertheless, it is necessary to point out that no one will ever realize Blake's true greatness as a poet who has not read *Vala* through from end to end. *Vala* is Blake's supreme attempt at the epic. Never again did he attempt so long or so connected a composition, or one of the same breadth, *Vala* is the story of the death and regeneration of all mankind. The scene is eternity and the time during which the action is consummated is all infinity. Page after page and passage after passage of superb poetry are unrolled before us. At the conclusion, the effect may be somewhat confused: but we must admit that only two other poets in all history have ever dared to grapple with a theme of remotely similar extent. These are Dante, and Goethe in his *Faust*. And

### *Yale Discovers Blake*

we must remember that both of these poets show the same tendency (to a lesser degree) as Blake's work: they present rather a succession of scenes, than a closely connected whole. We must remember also that Blake composed his work in about as many days as it took Dante and Goethe years to do theirs, and then laid this rough draft aside, never to return to it, except as a quarry whence materials for both *Jerusalem* and *Milton* were obtained.

These later works were written for a special purpose. Blake by this time had passed middle age. Oppressed by poverty, stung by taunts of madness, abandoned by his friends, Blake was anxious to vindicate his position as an artist and a prophet. Both *Milton* and *Jerusalem* are attempts to convert the public to Blake's theory of the universe, and like all such self-conscious attempts, there is more thumping of the pulpit, more expostulation, more detailed exposition, more symbolism, than poetry. Not that *Jerusalem*, in particular, does not contain much magnificent poetry. But the whole scheme is unpoetic, with its divisions into four chapters, addressed respectively to the Public, the Jews, the Deists, and the Christians; and with its elaborate and somewhat wearisomely iterated attempt to prove that England is the spiritual Jerusalem, or regenerator of the nations—an attempt carried out through an extended and complicated symbolism of cities and states that taxes mind and memory to the breaking point.

After *Jerusalem*, Blake was silent. Nothing proves the deep sanity of the man, as well as his heroism, better than

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the fact that he concluded after all that his deeper message was not for his day, and set himself again to art, with what glorious results everyone who has seen the illustrations to Job and Dante can testify.

When will the lovers of poetry and the students of Blake be given an adequate and a cheap edition of *Vala*—Blake's masterpiece? It is a disgrace to England and to America that nothing of the sort has been attempted. Blake is not a poet who appears to advantage in selections. It is to Professor Pierce's credit that he has given us rather longer blocks of *Vala* and *Jerusalem* than we so far have been accustomed to. But his volume, beautiful in typography, binding and paper as it is, is published at a price (two dollars) which sets it beyond the reach of the ordinary buyer. The recent Oxford Edition, priced at fifty cents, is in some ways more complete and more satisfying for the beginner.

Meantime there is the great Ellis-Yeats edition, as well as the late Ellis edition, both of which are now out of print and unobtainable. And in both of these the text, notably of *Vala*, is disfigured by emendations. *Vala* may be only a rough draft, but we want to read it as Blake left it. Let us hope that Professor Pierce will so far succeed with his venture that he will venture further and will give us the one complete poem of William Blake that, even in its rough and incomplete state, comes nearest to being a masterpiece of epic poetry.

John Gould Fletcher

CLAUDEL IN ENGLISH

*The Tidings Brought to Mary*, by Paul Claudel, translated by Louise Morgan Sill. Yale Univ. Press.

This poet—this adventurer—goes through life with his mind and emotions burning. The flame lights up places darker than the night, and before it solid things melt. The earth and the grain and the flower which it bears, the cow which gives us milk, the good daughter and the bad daughter—all are a congealed mystic breath, and one thing is as simple and as wonderful as another.

The bad daughter!—the poet's treatment of her is startling. It seems as if this Frenchman was the first human being to discover the truth which seems so evident after it is brought before one: that the human heart—the mystic piece of live struggling flesh—is of more importance than sin and virtue; that sin and virtue are, as compared to this real, live thing, a sort of external soil which might be washed off. Not even Tolstoi, who through all his life groped for this truth, reached this extreme tolerance, realized it so clearly. We catch a glimpse of this now and then in W. D. Howells, but not without some shade of snobbishness—it is the fine, lady-like heart that matters. Thomas Hardy and George Moore (in *Esther Waters*) have felt this, but only for the flesh-life of the woman.

To this reviewer, at least, it appears that the poet's use of miracles is not so strained as it seems superficially. The resurrection of the child is dramatically genuine and truth-

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ful; even Ibsen would not have hesitated to use it. It shows a dramatic intensity which is breath-taking.

The language is modelled partly on the prophets and partly on the modern vers-librists, and even in the translation, which is excellent, its beauty is evident, as these extracts show:

"The sky is beautiful:" but this is a beautiful thing too and even worthy of God—

The heart of a man that can be filled, leaving no part empty.

Do not turn from me that face—

There are enough angels to serve the mass in heaven.

Or this bit of dialogue between an old man and his wife, before he starts on his pilgrimage:

*Anne Vercos.* The yes which will separate us now, very low,

As round as the oui that formerly made us one.

*His Wife* (speaking very low). Yes, Anne.

With his fire, perhaps this author carries also a faint cloud; but who would begrudge him this cloud, in which his sensitive soul dwells as in a beautiful garden?

*Max Michelson*

### CATHAY AGAIN

*The Great White Wall*, by William Rose Benét. Yale Univ. Press.

The heroic narrative in verse, in which anthropomorphic gods and brawny heroes stride through countless cantos of hexameter, is necessarily out of vogue in these days of staccato short-stories in *vers libre* and pithy etchings that reduce a life to an epigram. Yet there is something in us that goes

behind the vogue, that escapes now and again from the stern censorship of our intellect and revels with a childlike glee in fierce bearded heroes with glittering swords, in lovely maidens in distress, in the color and gleam and swing of a crisp narrative in decorative verse. And as for the *Arabian Nights*, in whatever form we find them, it will be a mercifully long day before we lose our delight in them.

All these elements William Rose Benét has gathered together into a really enchanting tale in his latest book, *The Great White Wall*. He has called for his enchantment on all the ancient sources, on Kublai Kahn, on ancient Cathay, on Persia and India and Arabia; but the enchantment remains authentic, and Mr. Benét is at his happiest in evoking it. The lines are everywhere agleam with color, as in these, from the description of the army of Timur the Terrible on the march:

Pheasant feather and peacock plume from many a marching head-dress glitters.

Bows on backs, a crowd of archers bronzely swings along as one. Herds of antelope, goat, and nihlgao straggle along the armies' fringes.

Mimics, sorcerers, and buffoons in parti-colored costumes pass. Dancing girls with golden anklets trip in the desert dust that sings. High upheld above their bearers, banners stream from poles of brass.

Over all the embroidered arms of Samarcand, the City Splendid: Lion and Sun and Three Great Circles, threefold realms that signify,

Blaze on a banner of gold brocade. And, densely by his troops attended,

Odmar, leading the Avant-guard, to a blare of terrible horns goes by.

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Mr. Benét has avoided with real craftsmanship that pitfall of the narrative poem, a too regular rhythm. The framework of heroic measure is here, but so well does he halt and vary it that nowhere, even to the ear of the sophisticated, is the sense rocked to sleep in the cradle of the metre; and the ambitions and the love of Timur stand out almost as starkly as from prose. In the end too, while not losing the elaborate brightness of the key, he lends a note of human truth to the tale by having Timur's spiritual defeat come at the moment of his greatest physical triumph.

There is a distinct place in American poetry for Mr. Benét's jewelled stories, and it is to be hoped that he will give us more of them. E. T.

### OTHER BOOKS OF VERSE

The increase of public interest in poetry is shown by nothing more powerfully than by trade conditions—the number of interesting books of verse which are being published and apparently sold; and of anthologies, biographies, essays, etc., which belong to our province.

We propose to group together for brief mention now and then books which would justify more extensive notice if we had the space, or books whose authors have been so recently studied in our pages that there seems to be nothing especially new to say about them.

Here, for example, is *The Quest*, by John G. Neihardt (Macmillan Co.), a reprint of the best poems from his first

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### *Other Books of Verse*

three volumes—1907-1912. We have reviewed at some length this poet's more recent books, and further pages would but repeat a certain feeling of disappointment. Some of these poems seemed quite "advanced" when they first appeared; but the art has gone a long way since then, and many poets have raced past Mr. Neihardt, perhaps because they carry fewer impedimenta. He is too much preoccupied with the "masterful male" attitude, and with a diction and technique which seem old-fashioned today, the inspiration not being keen enough to carry the archaisms. *The Prayer for Pain* is perhaps the finest poem in the book. *The Hymn Before Birth* gives this poet at his worst in the second stanza and his best in the last.

*The Song of the Plow* (Macmillan Co.), by Maurice Hewlett, is a rhymed "English Chronicle," dedicated "to England, long divided, now made one." It begins with 1066, and turns its flash-light upon the wars of the roses, the despotic kings, the commonwealth, Waterloo, and other imperial episodes, ending with a vision of the *New Domesday*—the present war and all that its patriotic sacrifices mean for England. Though Mr. Hewlett is a poet by force of his own will rather than that of the gods, this poem, a fit subject for his muse, presents its mediaeval episode picturesquely, and rises to an eloquent patriotic apostrophe at the end.

*From the Hidden Way* (Robt. M. McBride & Co., New York) indicates that James Branch Cabell, a new Virginia poet, has mediaeval loves not unlike Mr. Hewlett's. The

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book is too long, but it contains a few poems of real delicacy, especially *One End of Love*, which POETRY printed under the title *Post Annos*; and perhaps *The Oldest Story*, whose last line, "But life remains life's plagiarist," sums up, in a way, the spirit of the book.

Glen Ward Dresbach's first book, *The Road to Everywhere* (Gorham Press), shows a dangerous facility, enriched now and then with a true lyric touch. *A Road Song* has a fine open-air feeling in it, a real shout and swing; while *Songs for a Violin*, and a few tiny songs like *The More I Know of the Ocean*, and, above all, *I Groped Through Blooms*, are exquisite. Several are familiar to our readers.

A sharp contrast is *Smoky Roses* (G. P. Putnam's Sons), by Lyman Bryson. Here the pace is slow and heavy, and the poet, oppressed by modern miseries, strips his verse bare of ornament. *The Flood* is characteristic—a stark description of the death in mad waters of a mother, after a desperate effort to save her child. *Gratitude* has a similar stern sincerity, and now and then we have a good song in minor cadence, like *The Guest*.

A light and delicate touch has Antoinette de Coursey Patterson. *The Son of Merope and Other Poems* (H. W. Fisher & Co., Philadelphia) is full of very fragile meshes, but they gleam with pale gold and soft color. *Danaïde*, for example, is lovely.

*Horizons* (Four Seas Co.), by Robert Alden Sanborn, are first-fruits from a carefully tended garden. The poet has delicate intuitions, but not quite the necessary magic. If

## Other Books of Verse

only the sun would shine more brightly in his garden, and the winds blow through it, we should not care in what pattern it was planted. But *Lento*, in the imagist manner, is a pretty thing.

*A Hidden Well: Lyrics and Sonnets*, by Louis How (Sherman, French & Co.), is a book of quiet songs, genuine in their soft appeal because they present with a certain delicacy personal and intimate moods of feeling. Such poems as *A Message*, *Strangers' Charm*, *Mere Living*, and some of the sonnets, are reflective rather than emotional; not exactly lyrics, perhaps, but sincere and personal, and gracefully done.

Grandiloquent is a descriptive word for the style of Frederick Mortimer Clapp, in *On the Overland and Other Poems* (Yale University Press). He piles Pelion on Ossa of words, figures, rolling phrases; especially in the free-verse poems—a form which gives him too much freedom because the moment he cuts loose from the familiar iambic the meagreness of his rhythmic instinct becomes painfully apparent.

He is safer under the restraint of the sonnet form, yet even then the efforts at sublimity too often achieve mere bombast, as in the line,

The night is like a snake  
Coiled lifeless on the twin vast brows of death—

One longs to suggest to certain poets a course of nursery rhyming to teach simplicity.

H. M.

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### OUR CONTEMPORARIES

#### HOME RULE

In a recent *Reedy's Mirror* Vachel Lindsay has a few pertinent things to say on the subject of *Home Rule for Poets*. One of them involves the critics or poets who prolong the barren discussion of the relative merits of free and metrical verse. "It is," he says, "as dreary as the ancient scanning of the ward-school pedagogues," which, he insists, made many readers grow up to dislike poetry. He might have added that in many cases we have heard precisely this class protesting most loudly against *vers libre*—a case of poetic prudery, so to speak, indicating need of the services of a skilful psycho-analyst. Mr. Lindsay says further: "The new free verse requires an ear that is first elaborately trained in conventional rhythms—the people that like it best are apt to be those who love the old poets." This is discriminating, and true.

Mr. Lindsay also issues a challenge to American poets, very consonant with his own philosophy of life, to leave Bohemia at a suitable age—as one would leave college—and take up the life of a citizen of the larger world, be it in Springfield, Illinois, or Davenport, Iowa. And he includes a reminder to the poet's home audience that "it is absurd for utterly unknown labor leaders, politicians, merchants or bankers to insist that their local singer prove that he has won the admiration of the unborn of the whole wide world for all the ages to come, before he is privileged to

sing the local songs." Properly distributed, he says, there is room for a hundred poets, one for each million inhabitants. This is a good deal like the dream of the proper distribution of wealth, but it is a good dream nevertheless. Meantime, however, I wish we could count on an audience of one million for a hundred poets, whether they are "snuggling in imitation Latin quarters" or planted out in the western cornfields. I wish we could boast that much.

A. C. H.

## CORRESPONDENCE

### A WORD FROM DR. GORDON

*Dear POETRY:* *A propos* of your aboriginal number, don't you think the red man will be a motive of ever increasing importance in American art? Undoubtedly some day we shall have a truly American music, painting, and literature; and who shall doubt that the red man will infuse his genius into it? I believe in both the rise and fall of man. Primitive races, not having fallen so low as is possible under civilization, may be nearer to art, closer to the universal creative spirit, than we. The greatest discoveries in biology have been made from a study of the lowly forms of life. The Indian instinctively appreciates color, line, rhythm and tone, which constitute the alphabet of art.

May I offer a few notes, which should have been printed last month to explain certain phrases in my poems?

*South Star Trail* means the Milky Way, which is the path of departed spirits. *Tirawa* is the Great Spirit, the deity.

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*Sa-a-Narai* means, "In old age walking the beautiful trail." In this poem: *Red Moccasin* is a name for the dove, because of its red legs; *Shagwakwa* is the mocking-bird; *eye-strings* are the optic nerves; *standing within me* refers to one's conscience. Also, certain lines refer to the myth of the First Mother, who ordered her bones burned and her flesh buried: tobacco sprang up from the bones, for the good of man's soul; and corn from the flesh, for the nourishment of his body.

The poem *Night* is built on the rhythm of a corn-grinding song of the pueblos:

Lovely, see the cloud, the cloud, appear;  
Lovely, see the rain, the rain, draw near.

*Who spoke?*

'Twas the little corn ear  
High on the tip of the stalk,  
Saying, while it looked at me,  
Talking aloft there,  
"Ah, perchance the floods,  
Hither moving,  
Ah, may the floods come this way—  
Wonder-water!"

*Frank S. Gordon*

### A DECLARATION

Dear POETRY: I really mean this!

### PATRIOTISM

Poetry, I would die for you.  
If you were recruiting armies  
I should not need conscription,  
But gladly I would go to your banners,  
And pin my heart against the bayonet of a foe,  
Or suffocate, drowning in floods of gas  
Horribly,  
Or tangle my guts in barbed wire.  
Any death, Poetry, for you—  
Willingly.  
But your demands of service are so difficult.

*Helen Hoyt*

## NOTES

Miss Helen Hoyt, born in Connecticut, and a resident of Chicago until her recent removal to Appleton, Wis., has been represented often in *POETRY*, as well as in *Others*, *The Egoist*, and other magazines. She received one of the two prizes awarded for lyric poems a year ago by *The Trimmed Lamp*.

Mr. Orrick Johns, of St. Louis, has also contributed frequently to the special magazines, and in 1912 he won the first prize in the *Lyric Year* contest. His first book, *Asphalt and Other Poems*, will soon be published by Alfred A. Knopf, New York.

Mr. Joyce Kilmer, one of the editors of the *Literary Digest* and the *New York Times*, and author of *Trees and Other Poems* (Geo. H. Doran Co.), is also on the point of publishing a new volume, *Main Street and Other Poems*.

Mr. Ford Madox Hueffer is now with the British army in France. His *Collected Works* were issued in 1914 by Max Goschen, London, and *Antwerp* last year by the Poetry Bookshop. His *On Heaven*, published exclusively in *POETRY* (June, 1914), is one of the finest poems we have had the honor of printing thus far. Mrs. Hueffer has appeared in *POETRY* and elsewhere, but has not yet published a volume.

Mr. Max Michelson, of Chicago, has appeared in *POETRY*, *Others*, *The Egoist*, etc., but has not yet published a volume.

Miss Amy Lowell's *Lacquer Prints* will be included in the third (1917) annual issue of *Some Imagist Poets*, soon to be published by the Houghton-Mifflin Co. Miss Lowell wishes to express her indebtedness to Mr. Arthur Davison Ficke, for his prose translation of *Streets*, by Yakura Sanjin, which appeared in his *Chats on Japanese Prints*. The other poems in Miss Lowell's series are not translations, but original interpretations.

The only poet new to our readers, Mr. Odell Shepard, of New York, will soon publish, through the Houghton-Mifflin Co., his first book of verse.

## BOOKS RECEIVED

### ORIGINAL VERSE:

*The Little Golden Fountain*, by Mary MacMillan. Stewart & Kidd Co., Cincinnati, O.

*Castles in Spain*, by Albert Fear Leffingwell. Privately printed.

## POETRY: *A Magazine of Verse*

*Mothers and Men*, by Harold Trowbridge Pulsifer. Houghton-Mifflin Co.

*Retgression and Other Poems*, by William Watson. John Lane Co.

*An Icelandic Poem*, by Matthias Jochumsson. Oxford Univ. Press.

*Lines Long and Short*, by Henry B. Fuller. Houghton-Mifflin Co.

*Second Once Over Book*, by Rex H. Lampman. Privately printed.

*A Woman Free and Other Poems*, by Ruth. J. F. Rowny Press, Los Angeles, Cal.

*The Hour of Sunset: Poems*, by Paulina Brandreth. Privately printed.

*Songs of Childhood*, by Walter de la Mare. Longmans, Green & Co., London.

*Op. I.*, by Dorothy L. Sayers. B. H. Blackwell, Oxford.

ANTHOLOGIES, TRANSLATIONS AND SPECIAL EDITIONS:

*Oxford Poetry* 1916. B. H. Blackwell, Oxford.

*The Old Wives' Tale*, by George Peele. Edited by Frank W. Cady. Richard G. Badger.

*A Standard Book of Verse*, printed for the English Club of Stanford Univ.

*Wheels: An Anthology of Verse*. B. H. Blackwell, Oxford.

*Songs from the Hill*. Privately printed.

*Anthology of Magazine Verse for 1916*, by William Stanley Braithwaite. Laurence J. Gomme.

*Armenian Poems*, rendered into English verse by Alice Stone Blackwell. Robert Chambers, Boston.

### PROSE:

*Art and the People*, by Otto H. Kahn. New York City Shakespeare Tercentenary Celebration Committee.

*The Rhythm of Prose*, by William Morrison Patterson, Ph. D. Columbia Univ. Press.

*Studies in Milton and An Essay on Poetry*, by Alden Sampson. Moffat, Yard & Co., New York.

*A Portrait of the Artist as a Young Man*, by James Joyce. B. W. Huebsch.

*Glimpses from Agnes Mathilda Wergeland's Life*, by Maren Michelet. Privately printed.







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